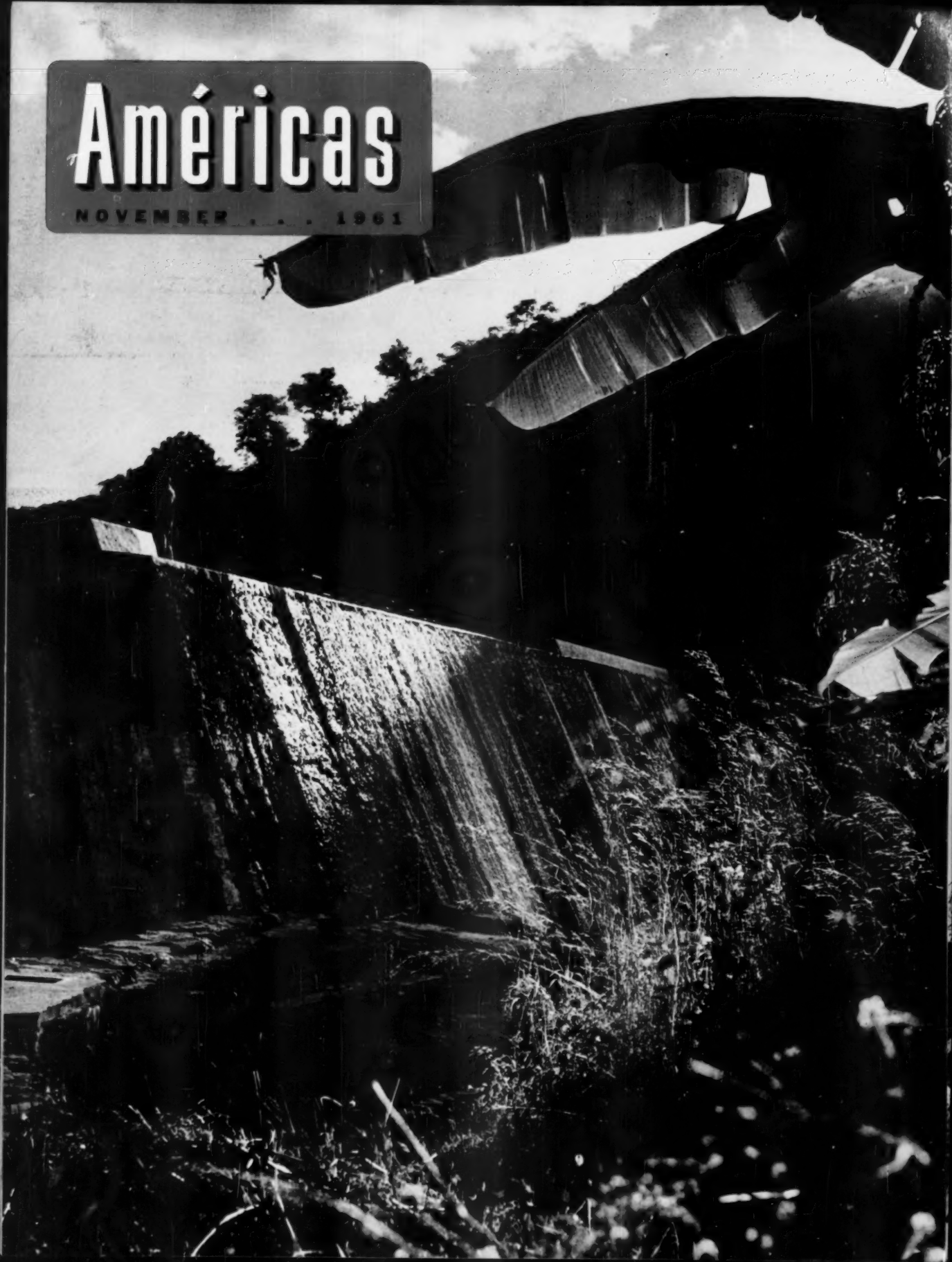
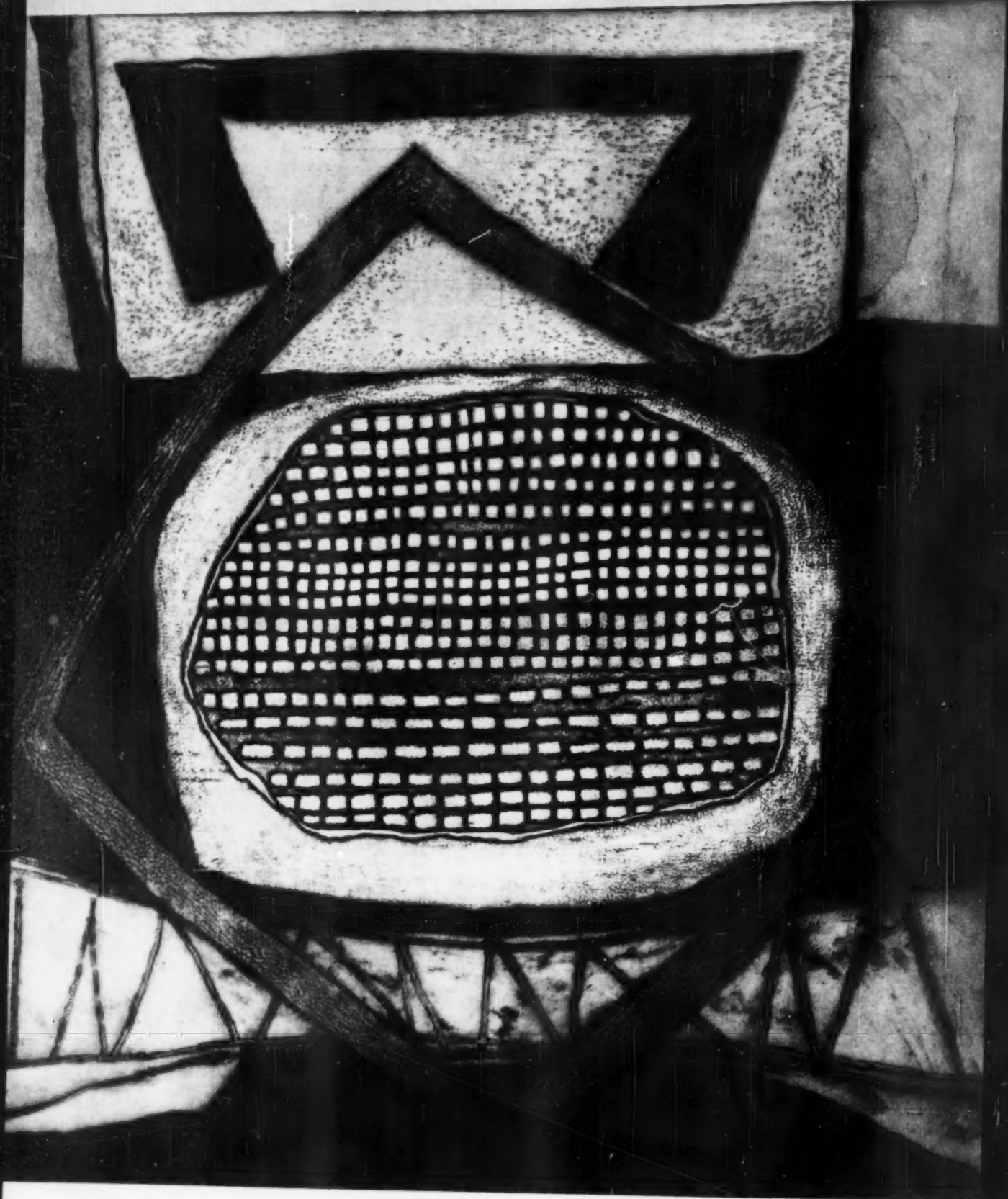


# Américas

NOVEMBER . . . 1961





Untitled engraving, by Roberto de Lamónica, 1960

# Américas

Volume 13, Number 11, November 1961

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George Meek, Flora L. Phelps

### Layout

Samuel Muschkin

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Dam retains precious water supply for Baturite, small city in Ceará State, Brazil. Photograph by Mario de Moraes of *O Cruzeiro*, courtesy ICA

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## Here and There

■ This month an official agency in each of the American republics will recommend candidates for the 1962 course at the Inter-American Rural Education Center in Rubio, Venezuela. Fifty fellowships will be provided by the OAS and fifteen by UNESCO for the 43-week course.

■ Carlos Asencio of the Institute of Biological Research in Madrid will teach biochemistry at the University of El Salvador this year, under the OAS Professorships Program.

■ This month some fifty scientists of the Americas who are concerned with the teaching of nuclear sciences and engineering are attending a Regional Seminar on Nuclear Energy in San Carlos de Bariloche, in southern Argentina, which is being sponsored by the Inter-American Nuclear Energy Commission of the OAS, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and UNESCO.

■ Protocolary sessions of the OAS Council in September marked the Washington visits of Peruvian President Manuel Prado and former Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek.

■ John R. Reitemeyer, chairman of the executive committee of the Inter-American Press Association, has been named chairman of a committee to plan the first inter-American seminar on science information, to be sponsored by the OAS.

■ Brazilian pianist João Carlos Martins, enthusiastically acclaimed for his performance at the Second Inter-American Music Festival in April, will present the complete *Well Tempered Clavichord* of Bach in a cycle of four concerts at the PAU in November and December. Scheduled to exhibit in the PAU Art Gallery in late November and early December is Guillermo Wiedeman of Colombia.

■ Still available from the PAU Sales and Promotion Division in Washington is the eight-volume series *América en Cifras—1960*, published by the PAU Department of Statistics. These handy reference works contain the most complete collection of demographic, economic, social, labor, and cultural statistics available in the Hemisphere. In addition to the more frequently sought-after information, you can find the latest figures on such details as how many bachelors there are in Paraguay, how many people died from appendicitis in Bolivia, how many cigarettes are produced in Chile, how many telegrams and letters Peruvians get each year from abroad, and the capacity of drive-in movies in Mexico.

## NEXT MONTH IN AMÉRICAS

In the December issue, watch for an interview with the well-known Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, and an article by Fernando Romero about an old university with a new look.



# J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, Director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey, and one of the world's foremost atomic physicists, has recently been visiting universities in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico in connection with the new Professorships Program of the OAS. The program will provide distinguished scholars from all over the world to teach at universities in the Americas that request them.

In Latin America Dr. Oppenheimer lectured on the cultural role of the scientist in the world today and on the present state of physics, held seminars on advanced physics, and exchanged ideas informally with nuclear physicists in the various countries.

AMÉRICAS takes pleasure in presenting this interview with Dr. Oppenheimer, another in its new series that will bring its readers the ideas of leading personalities on subjects of Hemisphere-wide interest; it has been transcribed from a recording made before his departure.

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*AMÉRICAS Reporter: Noticing the peaceful atmosphere here, where so many bald-headed geniuses are at work, I was just thinking that in Latin America we do not find this kind of institution and this kind of university out in the country.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: Colleges in small towns are very common, but this Institute is the only one of its kind in the world, although now we are beginning to see a time when new ones are being planned or established. There is a new one in Paris now, and I think that in ten years there will be many new institutes for advanced study.

*Reporter: But do you think, with your experience, that this kind of isolation from the everyday life of the big cities is good for learning pure science?*

Dr. Oppenheimer: We have enough experience to know that it is good for many people for a year or two, and there is a much smaller number of people for whom it is relatively, not only good, but relatively a great, great help even for their whole way of life. But that is more rare, and it is also true, of course, that the people who come here for a year come from a busy life and return to one. The people who are more or less permanently here—and there are not very many of them—also do a tremendous amount of sortieing, going out to visit, to lecture, to study; the notion of isolation is hardly a good description of the life of the people who are here. They work very hard; they may have colleagues here and they usually do; they work as hard as they can; and they move about, for we are part of the traffic of the scientific and learned world, and that traffic is a very intense one.

*Reporter: Have you ever been in Latin America before?*

Dr. Oppenheimer: I have been in Brazil at a time rather different from this, in the summer of 1953 when the National Research Council invited me down, and I have been also in Puerto Rico, which in a sense is Latin America but has certain special features.

## Pure Science

*Reporter: As you know very well, countries like the Latin American ones now are in a hurry for technology and for applied science; therefore, I think it will be interesting if you explain to them the real usefulness of pure science, even in the cases of countries in a hurry.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: Yes, of course. It is interesting in this connection how much the engineering training in this country has changed. Twenty years ago at the California Institute of Technology, or at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a man who planned to be an engineer enrolled in an engineering course. Today, 80 or 85 per cent enroll in physics mostly, mathematics some, chemistry some, not because they plan to practice pure science but because the knowledge of the pure sciences prepares them better for tomorrow's engineering than does today's engineering. This is not something that the faculty thought of, this is what the students do. And so there is some kind of immediacy and depth to it. It is probably true that the attractions of abstract science are well understood in many of the communities of South America. I know we have many members from South America here at the Institute. I know of colleagues, not in all countries, but in many. They are extremely brilliant practitioners of abstract science. Between pure and applied science, I don't think that it is so much a question of saying one or the other, but the two help each other. And it would be a great mistake to say that one had to wait with agricultural improvement, with technological development, until one had a complete population of pure scientists. It is just that they help each other.

## Humanities and Science

*Reporter: In connection with pure science and technology, a subject that is very much discussed now in Latin America, and has provoked many polemics, is the relation between the humanities and science. There they make a distinction. I do not know whether it is possible really to make a distinction between the humanities and pure science. I think probably they are the same thing.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: I agree with you, but also in this country and in Europe the distinction is made. It is a sign of a certain lack of health in our society, otherwise we



# on Science and Culture

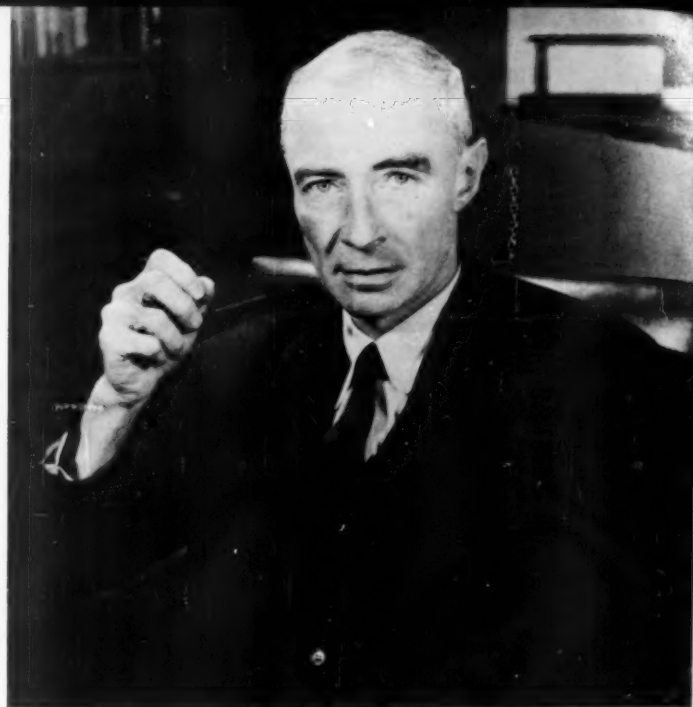
would recognize that the pure sciences and the humanities are continuous with one another; but this trouble is not limited to Latin America, it is very acute in this country, and it is very acute in Europe.

*Reporter: But from your experience as a university man, what could be a solution in this kind of society that you have here and the kind of society that Latin America will have in ten or twenty years—a middle-class technological society?*

Dr. Oppenheimer: Probably the image of a solution is a misleading one, because I am not sure that we can restore the kind of intimacy and unity of, let us say, the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century culture which we tend to think of. These were smaller societies. Although they were changing, they were changing at a much slower rate. The volume of knowledge was far less vast and the specialization of knowledge, although appreciable, was nothing like as great as it is today. So, I do not mean by solution a return to an earlier form of unitary culture, but I think we may look forward to many different things. One is very much more effective teaching, both in childhood and youth, and in later years. One is a reservation of more of the vigor and resources of human life for the life of the mind. It is one of the by-products of affluence that one can do this, but the main thing, I think, is an appreciation of the fact that one can take great delight in learning something—learning it deeply and honestly—at the same time that one is aware that there is a kind of arbitrariness in the fact that one has learned this and not something else. One cannot learn everything well, but one can learn some things well.

*Reporter: That calls for discrimination . . .*

Dr. Oppenheimer: And it might not be even a discrimination for which any abstract value judgment can be justified. I mean a man may wish to learn something on contemporary molecular biology and not be interested in contemporary astrophysics. That probably does not rest on any well-founded judgment that astrophysics is a less valuable subject than biology. This sense of multiple connectedness and openness in our societies is something we very much need, and it should go from the historical sciences to the natural sciences, and from the biological to the physical, and from the mathematical to the naturalistic. It should also go from all these questions of learning essentially new things to the normative discussions without which we cannot live, the discussion of what we ought to do and what is right. This is, to my mind, the hardest part. Teaching is hard. Reserving time and above all life and spirit for the life of the mind is



hard. But the hardest part, I think, is to accept a society which is interconnected, but which is not in any one man's mind completely present or open.

## Better Teaching

*Reporter: The people in the humanities complain that scientists do not know and are not interested in the humanities, but the scientists certainly also can complain that the humanists are not interested in a broad sense in the sciences, but without being interested in science I think it is very difficult to understand the world now, as it is. But has something been done to synthesize this broad understanding of the world from the point of view of science? Because you cannot expect a lawyer to know physics and biology at an advanced level, but he should be able to understand them. But there is no way now.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: When I speak of better teaching this is one of the problems I have in mind. I don't think you expect to find a physicist who understands biology in general. There may be such a fellow but he is an exception. I do think there is an essential point here. Some sciences are less developed and easier to follow than others, because there is not such a long preparation and history; but in any science the part of it that is like the experience of the artist, and that makes the science a humane and humanistic discipline, is precisely the part of finding something really novel, and this cannot be well appreciated except by imitating the action, to quote Aristotle. It cannot really be learned by reading an encyclopedia article that tells you what was found, but not on the basis of what and how. This is precisely the creative part—which is therefore the specific and not the summary part, and is the part that assimilates the sciences to other forms of creative human experience. So it is not so easy. It cannot just be done by having tables to look things up in.

*Reporter: In Latin America, for instance, we are accustomed to saying that our people are very gifted in mathematics, remembering that the Aztecs had a calendar that was advanced for their time. Other people say that our countries are very good in geology because we have some geological problems. . .*

*Dr. Oppenheimer: And obviously very good in medicine, where great discoveries have had to be made, and have been made.*

#### Cultural Differences

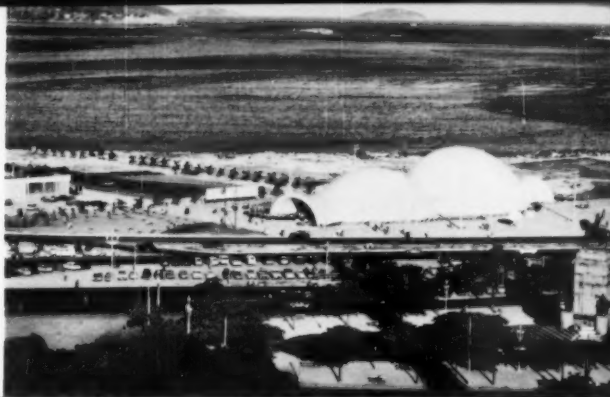
*Reporter: With your experience with Americans and with people from other countries, do you think that there are really peoples who are more gifted, or it is just a consequence of the problems and challenges that they have to face?*

*Dr. Oppenheimer: There are cultural differences. But I would be very astonished if there were any innate differences. We see that in a very striking way in the Far East. And Japan is a good example because it was essentially a closed society until a century ago, but the Japanese are very active and very talented in mathematics and mathematical sciences and physics, and this they have picked up within really very few generations. There was no basis for this in ancient Japanese culture. Two of my most gifted colleagues here at the Institute, two professors of physics, are Chinese. Although the Chinese have millennial traditions of learning, they have never had traditions of this kind of learning before. So it is not a matter of many generations. As I have said, although the number is not very large and although the opportunities are only now beginning to appear, there are very gifted physical scientists in the most abstract part of physics, gifted experimental physicists, gifted mathematicians in Latin America who do not seem to suffer from the fact that the tradition is not very old in their country. It is not very old anywhere, and I would think that if there were a problem in Latin America it is more like that which is encountered, perhaps in Spain, certainly in France—a certain rigidity and archaic quality of the educational curriculum which delays the arrival at what we might call the growing front of the science, and is not entirely appropriate to prepare one for questions to which no one yet knows the answer. This is only an impression and I should perhaps reserve it until I know more about the subject.*

#### Atomic Energy

*Reporter: And speaking about the questions to which nobody knows the answer—in Latin America, in our underdeveloped and non-industrialized countries, there are many illusions about atomic energy applied to industries and so perhaps you are the best man in the world to set the picture right.*

*Dr. Oppenheimer: I am not sure. It is a complex picture. It is easy to take a simplistic view, which is that atomic energy will solve the problems of technological development and industrialization, and it is also easy to take the view that it is of no interest whatever. But the*



*U. S. Atomic Energy Commission's traveling exhibit, Atoms for Peace, presented with full cooperation of host countries, has visited Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro (shown here), and Lima, will open in Mexico City in April*

*truth, I think, is uncomfortably in between. The first impact of any major technical development is always the same; it makes the rich richer. On the other hand, the choices open to developing communities and societies are enormously enriched by everything that has been found. Among these is a new source of power which is not prohibitively expensive and which, for instance in England, has proven very useful and which could conceivably prove very useful in those parts of Latin America which are far removed from sources of fuel and sources of water power. Obviously water power is a nice cheap substitute for fuel—if you have it near.*

*Reporter: You are a man who is not just restricted to science, but who is interested in politics, economics, everything. In underdeveloped countries in which governments have a strong tendency, accepted by everybody, toward some kind of controlled economic planning, do you think that the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes could be better obtained by some governmental planning and public ownership or better by just private initiative and private ownership?*

*Dr. Oppenheimer: In principle it could certainly be done either way. It is a fairly large enterprise, which, for a fairly long time, is not profitable, and for this reason it will be a rare corporation that will find this attractive and will do it effectively. This is as of today, and it may change. I have no sense of aversion to this being done by a government corporation like the Tennessee Valley Authority, which seems a natural way to do it. But I think that it is a development which easily can be extremely wasteful, and that some notion of economy and efficiency should be involved in it.*

*Reporter: Yes, we have a lot of experience of inefficiency in government. . . .*

*Dr. Oppenheimer: Well, so do we all. . . . This has been a great source of debate in this country and it has aroused very strong feelings, but it hasn't produced any atomic power, this debate; it is even questionable whether it has prevented the production of atomic power. There are obviously important differences between the way of reasoning, the way of learning, and the way of expressing interest in science and in culture in general, in the United States or Anglo-Saxon countries and in Latin American*

countries.

### Latin America and the United States

*Reporter: In general I feel that the Americans are not aware that their country is one of the most "different" countries in all the world.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: I may be misinterpreting what you say, but it seems to me that Latin America has been the site of very traditional communities, communities very aware of the past, living to some extent in the past, and this is one thing that the Chinese and the French have a great deal of—at least the Chinese had—I am not sure what is happening now. And it is one thing that has played a relatively very small part in American life, partly because we have been changing so rapidly and we are such a hodgepodge of different people. I am aware of this and I also am aware of the fact that between any peoples there are difficulties of talking; but I would say that when we talk about the world of nature, including natural knowledge of man, we are in the possible condition for understanding each other. The problems are more likely to arise in talking about what we regard as a good life or a good society, or what we think is beautiful and what we think is ugly. There it is indeed hard to transcend one's own culture and perhaps not entirely desirable to transcend it, but one of the great things about the sciences is that they have in them the possibility of effective, unambiguous communication on a completely world-wide scale. And one of these days, we are going to have to get to that.

*Reporter: That will be very interesting.*

Dr. Oppenheimer: It is very necessary.

*Reporter: I agree. But what I was trying to find out, when I put the question, is this: Modern science, especially physics, is new, in fact very new for Latin America, something with which they don't have any experience, because it is not just the continuation of the old science but a big change for Latin Americans, for Asia, for all traditional cultures. Therefore there is the possibility, almost the probability, that they will tend to imitate, and of course they will tend to imitate the United States. They will tend to imitate the ways of explaining, the ways of using, the ways of doing research, that do not come spontaneously from their way of thinking, from their cultural way of life. I suppose this is a danger that cannot be prevented. But is it really a danger or not?*

Dr. Oppenheimer: I think first of all that although United States society does have many great contrasts both with European and with Latin American, in the matter of the sciences, of physics, for instance, we in the United States are simply the inheritors of the European tradition. Almost nothing was done to make the fundamental sciences in this country. One thinks of some charming episodes, like Franklin and lightning, but if you ask, where did we learn our science, what is the tradition, it is rooted in France and England, in Italy and Scandinavia, and the low countries. When I was a young man, I went to Europe to learn physics. I didn't know

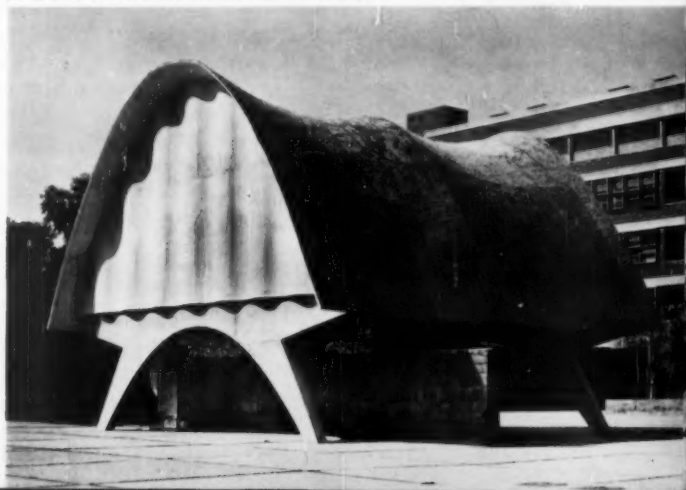
that one could earn a living as a theoretical physicist. This I found out in Europe. Now I would say that compared to the state of physics—the advanced parts of pure physics—when I was young man in this country, the situation in many countries in Latin America is quite favorable. This is only to indicate that the tradition is learnable, that it is congenial, and that with encouragement and the right environment, it can grow very fast indeed.

### The Right Environment

*Reporter: And in the context of Latin America, what is this right environment?*

Dr. Oppenheimer: I will say a few things of which I am not certain. There are the obvious ones. There must be what in a large sense can be called patronage for science, that is, a pure scientist is not going to produce in visible form immediate wealth. Yet he ought to be able to live and have the necessary opportunity to concentrate on what is extremely hard work. He ought to be respected, not adored, not made a superman, but respected as a man engaged in a difficult and valuable trade or profession. These are obvious things. He ought, I believe, to be typically in a university, where he may have good intellectual companionship both with other generations and with other professions. This is not the only thing, but it's the best. But let me say what the other ingredient of the environment is which I believe has been decisive for the growth of science in modern times in Europe and now also in this country. That is some kind of notion of the possibility of the perfectability of man and his life—progress. This is the peculiar non-scientific ingredient in stimulating scientific growth. And if you ask why the Chinese did not really develop science, if you ask why the Greeks and their followers did not really develop science, you can study the history books for a long time and find many answers. But my own answer is that the lack of the notion of progress in history is probably a decisive reason. So that as the countries and communities of Latin America begin to adopt a model, an ideal of human society in which the movement of history has a meaning, I think that the climate for the study of science and its application will become increasingly favorable. ☞

*Dr. Oppenheimer visited National University of Mexico under OAS program. University's cosmic ray laboratory*







## THROUGH THE VENEZUELAN COUNTRYSIDE

WHEN I SPEAK of our travels through the back country of Venezuela or South America, many young people think they would like to go with us. However, when I explain to them where we go and the conditions under which we travel, very few repeat their offers to go along. Travel facilities, with modern, rapid means of transportation and accommodations in good hotels, have made it hard to conceive of going anywhere unless a minimum of comfort is assured. However, sometimes it is very useful to leave the beaten path and get to know the people who live in the country, see how they spend their lives, learn what they think and feel, what their aspirations are, and what they expect of the future.

In the country, we can appreciate our origins and the debt we have to our forebears when we see people who still live in remote and generally inhospitable places. And we can amuse ourselves hearing stories told by some highly imaginative grandfather, who wants us to believe that he has traveled to the bird country, that he has found an ugly mean witch who is holding an enchanted prince, that he knows things "from the dead," and many other things like that. Or we can be entertained by hearing music different from the sort we hear every day—music

ISABEL ARETZ, internationally known musicologist, was born in Buenos Aires, and has resided in Venezuela for the past decade, where she is technical advisor to the Institute of Folklore of the Venezuelan Ministry of Education. She also teaches folklore to music teachers, and directs the Escuela de Formación Artística in Caracas. She has written books on Argentine and Venezuelan folklore and composed music, especially for ballet.

# FOLKLORE SAFARI

ISABEL ARETZ

that brings us a message from the time when written music had not even been invented. For folk music, like everything that the people know through traditions, comes from the depth of the centuries. Or we can attend festivals and dances that do not follow the established canons of modern civilization, because the country people dance in a different way, and many times even for different reasons.

Here in Venezuela the people venerate their saints, from whom they expect everything, and they carry out their promises to honor them each year with processions, songs, and dances, often done to the beating of a drum. Descendants of the Negroes who were imported to work on the sugar, coffee, and cacao plantations live in the villages along the coast, and there St. John is venerated, and dances are dedicated to him during the entire month of June. Drums beat in the dead of night, and the entire village goes toward the sound. Circles are formed and couples take their turns at dancing while the rest reply in chorus to the soloists who sing out among them. The songs are very strange, and very different from Negro spirituals. The words cannot always be repeated, because for them everything that happens is natural—and can be sung.

The Negroes love their drums and give them names. In a village not very far from the famous beaches along the coast, they told us once that a truck had run over Burro Negro (as they called the big drum). That day the women wept, and the men carried the big drum to be buried. And in an Andean village, where they pay tribute to St.

Benedict, "a black saint, but very sensitive," as a couplet says, we found an entire battery of drums draped in black crepe. The drums were in mourning because the one who had made them had died.

It is very interesting to follow one of the popular processions. The priests do not participate, but merely say a mass to honor the saint when his statue is carried to the church. These statues are generally privately owned and kept in private homes. On the day of the celebration, all the neighbors help dress the saint. Then they place him on a festooned litter and carry him through the village, and sometimes through nearby villages. Men and women take turns carrying the saint on the litter. In front go the drums, and the standardbearers who wave large banners of various colors. Behind the saint come the people. The grown-ups wear their best clothes, and large straw hats. The children, sometimes naked, or dressed as the saint "because of a promise," accompany the saint, dance to him, sing to him, implore him, or rebuke him if he has not given them something they have asked for. In Venezuela, the people treat saints with much familiarity, calling them their best friends, sprinkling them with sugar-cane juice and perfume, and causing them to dance in their litters.

To another village to the east called San Francisco de Yare, the tourists, both Venezuelan and foreign, go to see a very strange celebration held on Corpus Christi Day. In that village, the devils come out, red devils, with enormous masks covering their faces or even covering their chests, tied with a big handkerchief around the neck. The devils go as far as the door of the church, but they do not dare enter the House of God. The people must conquer the demon they carry inside them, and so they dance and dance all day long, in front of the church, going from house to house in the village, back and forth in front of the procession, or afterwards—when the religious festival has ended and the curious have gone away—gathered in the house of the old leader. There they dance the Bamba, which is reminiscent of the ceremonies of their ancestral kings in the Congo.

Near Mérida, in the Andes, where there are snowcapped mountains and the highest cable car lift in the world, the farmers of La Parroquia hold a festival in honor of Our Lady of Candelaria, who gives them good health and well-being. Dressed as old cavaliers, they do a dance in front of the temple that is a mixture of agricultural rites and the crossing of sticks. A strange mixture only to us, because to them it is a tribute to the Virgin to whom they owe their very lives. Their parents promised that their children would always do this dance, and they must keep that promise until the end of their days. When one of them leaves his village, he returns before the day of the festival, takes part in the rehearsals of the dances, and readies his costume so that he can join the group on February 2.

Another very beautiful festival in Venezuela is the one that takes place on May 3, especially in the plains and eastern regions. On that date, the finding of the Holy Cross is celebrated by decorating the patios of homes with crosses and holding "wakes" in which tal-



*Palm-thatched house in rural Venezuela; mud and cane walls were decorated by the lady of the house*



*Roads in the remote areas are seldom kind to cars. Isabel Aretz, and the car she used on field trips*



*Saint carved by local sculptor. Agua Negra, Yaracuy State*



Singer sings out before a "dressed" cross on a special altar, on May 3, when the finding of the Holy Cross is celebrated

ented singers participate. In the plains, music is sung in three parts, and is generally a *capella*. It is very interesting to watch the singers. They uncover their heads before the cross. They draw up a chair on which each rests one foot, and, standing very close together, they begin to sing, one after the other. First, the "guide" or *alante* (one in front) intones a verse of poetry. As the first motif of the song ends, the *contrato*, which must be a corruption of the word *contralto*, comes in. Then comes the singer with the low voice who is called the *tenor*, following the very common Venezuelan custom of changing "r" to "l". The three thus sing a cadenza which is not the less accurate for being improvised. Then the guide sings again, and the song continues in this manner for a long time, as the singers improvise poems or recall poems learned from their elders. These are not contemporary poems, because even the improvisations are always based on traditional forms or motifs. Poems and ballads are presented in "divine" or "profane" quartets, depending on whether they are sung before or after dawn. Because "when the sun begins to come out, the wake is done," and the singers can amuse themselves and others by singing poetry about love or a variety of other themes.

In eastern Venezuela the Festival of the Cross is also celebrated, but there the songs are different. They are sung as solos, accompanied by a mandolin, guitar, and *cuatro*, the small, four-stringed ancient guitar that is the national instrument of Venezuela. The songs are very often *galerones*, with a very free rhythmic melody and an accompaniment that repeats over and over the same rhythmic and harmonic form. The singers follow each other in front of the decorated altar, which often does

not have a cross, because the wake is held in an open patio and is dedicated to "the cross that is in the Heavens," formed of four stars.

In addition to these religious celebrations, the people have their dances for recreation. Then everyone who wants to dances, accompanied by harps and *maracas*, or by mandolin, *cuatro*, and *maracas*. This is the way it is at authentic creole festivals, where the *joropo* is danced. In all the villages and towns, they also do the currently popular dances, which are in marked contrast to the national dance.

In the *joropo*, the dancers touch finger tips, tracing a kind of waltz pattern without dancing very close together, and from time to time they dance completely separately. Sometimes the men stamp, but the women do not. They slide their feet along with a softer step. Here, all the couples move independently, with no coordination of figures as occurs with the well-known *contre-dance*, which also used to be danced in Venezuela.

As for the Indian *maracas*, which today are found throughout almost all the Latin American countries, they take on a special significance here, since the musicians try to shake them sometimes on beat, sometimes off beat, making designs in the air with them, each of which produces a special sound as the seeds inside strike together. And while the harpist and the *cuatro* player remain seated, the poor *maracas* player stands for hours. By way of compensation, he sometimes sings—though not always on key—long stories known as *corridos*, like those in Mexico and other countries. These begin here with a sustained high note, to fall gradually in a kind of recitative. In the *corridos*, the poets refer to local events,



either gay or tragic, past or present. They tell of some famous person, or recount unbelievable adventures, in which persons or animals play the principal parts, or they sing of the virtues of plants, or bring in themes that are of interest to the crowd.

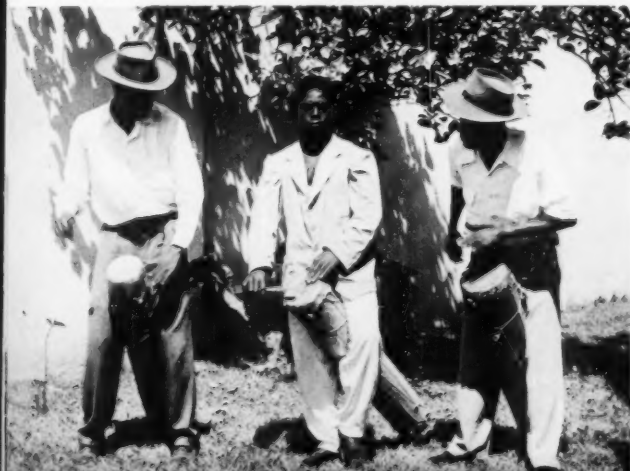
This is the folklore of Venezuela, enjoyed—and sometimes endured—by those who do research on this subject. Houses are built of cane, with palm-thatched roofs, lighted by wax candles or kerosene lamps. Furniture is scanty, with a hamper or a chest for clothing and souvenirs; hammocks hung for sleeping, or hard wooden beds, depending on whether it is cold or hot. Kitchens are smoky from the wood fire, a pot of potato soup or a stew or *sancocho* is on the fire, and there are *arepas*, the corn bread that is baked on round slabs of clay or iron. There are families with their many children, all very silent and respectful, who kneel and cross their arms to ask their father or godfather, whom they never address with the familiar *tu*, for his blessing. Children wear at their necks the canine tooth of a black dog, or a bead of jet, to ward off danger or the Evil Eye. They are children with a short childhood and a long adolescence, which they spend working, the girls caring for their little brothers and sisters, the boys helping their fathers in the heavy work of the fields where a modern tractor has not yet been seen and present-day mechanization is unknown.

It is a pleasure for the folklore researcher to talk



Hand-woven fishtrap will be placed in the sea

These three drums accompany statue of Saint John in annual June procession through coastal village



These "Candelaria dancers" have walked miles through the mountains to fulfill the vows their parents made for them

to the country people of Venezuela or of any other country. They are always good, hard-working, long-suffering people, who offer the visitor what little they have and ask no questions. It is rather we who feel obligated to explain to them why we have asked them to tell us stories or sing on other than the established days, or to explain to us how they work the soil, how they hunt or fish, how they make baskets, weave hammocks, or make fishing nets; to tell us their religious beliefs, their fears, and the more or less secret cures used by the folk healers, or *curanderos*; to give us recipes for their typical dishes and drinks, and many other things, the knowledge of which is the purpose of our trips.

They, in turn, always like us, because we tell them the truth and make them understand that we love their traditions, and that their children should not consider them an indication of backwardness, but as living history. Besides, much of their lore is very valuable. In the past, and still today, great artists have turned to the simple life to renew the sources of their inspiration and give us a message, either to the nation or to the Hemisphere. We also tell these country people that we utilize much of their lore in the teaching in our nation's schools, and this fills them with pride, because never did they think that what they have learned only by living could be taught in the classroom.

Our country people are so modest that when I published in one of my books a photograph of a man who carves figures for crèches, whom we found in a remote Andean region, and someone from the city who knew him took him the book so that he could see himself, he could not believe it. Deeply moved, he said that he had always believed that only great men like Bolívar could have their pictures in books. ☺



*Maria Libia de Gamboa, OAS fellow from Argentina, at Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, discusses economic development with fellow students from Nigeria, Indonesia, Korea, and the United States*

**ROSA VALDIVIA**

NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO, in January 1958 to be exact, the OAS Council, acting on a recommendation of the Committee of Presidential Representatives, established the OAS Fellowships Program. The Council recognized the impelling need to meet the ever-growing and ever more pressing requirements for education and training, and that it was necessary to make maximum use of the excellent educational facilities available in many American countries. The second aspect holds special promise, because it can promote inter-American cooperation among the countries and provide the opportunity for closer contacts among the people.

The plan is an expression of the efforts of the countries of the Hemisphere to speed development and to improve the quality of professional personnel, which is so necessary for that development. No factor could be overlooked if that objective were to be achieved. The Council, in approving the procedure for administering the Fellowships Program on the basis of the Committee's recommendations, initiated one more OAS activity designed to foster progress in the Americas. The responsibility for implementing it fell to the Secretary General.

As a basis for its recommendations, the Committee undertook a thorough study of the project, sponsored by the United States and Brazil. Many were the problems to be solved. The most important were: How the program would be administered, who would be eligible for the individual fellowships, and which fields of study should be given preference. The latter proved to be the easiest to solve. Governments were asked to indicate their individual needs and to request that priority be given to this or that technical skill or profession necessary for their development plans. So the criteria for distributing the fellowships among the various fields are based on the

requirements of the governments. To achieve total impartiality in the awarding of fellowships, an Advisory Board was set up and requirements for applicants were established.

#### **What Is the Advisory Board?**

The regulations for the awarding and administering of fellowships provide that the program be carried out by the Secretary General, but an activity of this magnitude obviously cannot be performed by a single person. It is an arduous task to read, every six months, the files and information on three or four hundred applicants, a task that should be divided among several people, and this is what is done.

The Advisory Board's mission is to assist the Secretary General. It is composed of experts in a variety of fields, named by him, and includes personnel from the Pan American Union as well as from other international organizations.

It is not unusual to hear an applicant say: "The ambassador of my country is a friend of the Secretary General," or, "My country's ambassador owes my family a favor," or, "The secretary of the Fellowships Program is very kind and I'm sure he'll give me preferential treatment." There are applicants who think that any of these "connections" will open doors for them, but they are mistaken. It doesn't help them a bit if their ambassador is a friend of the Secretary General, or if someone owes their family a favor, or that the secretary of the Fellowships Program is a kind person; the requirements are quite other. The OAS fellowships are not awarded on the basis of influence; if they were, it would have been impossible for the program to gain such high prestige in so short a period of time.

#### **How Does the Advisory Board Work?**

The Department of Technical Cooperation of the Pan

*ROSA VALDIVIA is an Ecuadorian journalist who writes for various publications in her own country and other countries of the Hemisphere.*

# FELLOWSHIPS

## for whom?

American Union, through its Division of Fellowships, has charge of the administrative side of the program. Applications and supporting documents are received there and placed in a separate file for each candidate. The applicant must submit a form that gives information on his professional preparation and other data, the names of three people who know him professionally, evidence that he has been accepted by a university or educational institution, and a complete, detailed plan of studies, written in his own language and in that of the country where he wants to study. This study plan is one of the most important documents for judging a candidate, because in it he expresses himself in his own professional language, and this can reveal whether his education and knowledge are sufficient for the technical or professional training that he is seeking. The Division of Fellowships is in charge of requesting all these documents in order to be able to present a complete file to the Advisory Board.

Each application is first considered individually by the Board members. Then it is discussed by a group of experts in the particular field and is classified according to the group's evaluation. These evaluated applications are finally considered by the directors of the Board, five of its members from different professions or fields. If an applicant's field of specialization is one that is not represented on the Board, experts from some OAS department may be called on to make a special report, and this guides the Board in many difficult cases. Under this system it is impossible for favoritism to exist or for outside pressures to affect the decisions.



### What Factors Are Considered in Selection?

The Board members who study individual applications sometimes come across unusual and difficult cases. Some, because although a student is good, the confidential reports sent by his references do not rate him highly enough; others, because the plan of studies is confusing or because the applicant has chosen studies that do not suit him. It is not always easy to find out who will make good use of a fellowship.

In many cases, although all the required documentation is available and the person has good marks and has been accepted by a university or technical institute, other requirements are not met. This will usually show up in the plan of studies, which can be very revealing. For example, there was the case of a student whose qualifications were not bad but who had multiple ambitions. He had graduated as an interior decorator in his country, and while he was waiting for the fellowship to be awarded was studying history at a U.S. university. He was seeking a fellowship to study social sciences in Brazil, but the institution where he sought admission there suggested that he do the studies in Chile. He was not accepted at any institution in Chile either, but he finally secured admission to an institution in Peru, not to study social sciences but to study public administration. The worst part of the matter was that his plan of studies called for work in public relations: he wanted to learn about radio and television for use in the rural communities in his country. In short, an interior decorator, studying history, interested in the social sciences, accepted for a public administration course, hoped, at the end of the course, to be a public information specialist. So confused were his ambitions and so useless would a fellowship be to him that his application was, of course, rejected.

The cases of students who are poorly prepared or have little interest in studying also come to light in the grades supplied by the institutions or universities that they have



*Mexican National Institute of Cardiology.  
OAS fellows from many countries study here*



attended. This is another way of evaluating a student, because a degree itself is no more important than the way in which it was earned. The Advisory Board is guided by the documentation, which covers the applicant from so many angles that it makes it possible to determine his or her merit. The confidential recommendations are especially helpful because they are made by professional people, including professors, who would not compromise their names by giving a false report, because if a student is poor it will show up in short order. This is why the Program has had a minimum of failures.

The governments, upon being consulted, indicated their preferences concerning which fields of study should be given priority. Many reported a need for preparing more specialists in economics, others in public administration, industrial technology, social services, medicine, or education. The fellowships have been awarded in accordance with these expressed needs and with the facilities available in each country. For example, a Mexican would not have to leave his country to study cardiology, a Colombian to study linguistics, or an Argentine to study social service, and so on for many other countries that have excellent educational centers that can be utilized.

There are also cases in which a professional person may wish to do some special piece of research, or to study some new technique in surgery, engineering, or agriculture. These fellowships are generally of short duration, do not require acceptance at an educational institution, and are granted on the basis of the benefit that the country will receive from the proposed professional improvement.

Since the Program began, countless universities, research institutes, and centers for specialized training in the Americas have cooperated with it, granting facilities and scholarships for studies in science, agriculture, public administration, social sciences, humanities, engineering, architecture, medicine, and so on. Their cooperation is most helpful, because it cuts down the cost of tuition, and the money saved there can be used to increase the number of fellowships.

#### How Many Fellowships Have Been Awarded?

So far, the OAS has received applications for 3,500

#### Who Can Apply for Fellowships?

According to the official provisions of the Program, OAS fellowships are open to university graduates or those with equivalent technical preparation living in the OAS member states, whether they be citizens or only permanent residents. Fellowships are of two types: those for advanced study and those for research, and they are granted for periods of not less than three months or more than two years. A fellowship provides funds sufficient to cover travel expenses, registration and tuition fees, study materials, and room and board, and the amount varies according to the cost of living in the country chosen by the fellow. Application must be made to the Technical Secretariat of the Program of Fellowships and Professorships at least six months before the date when the candidate proposes to commence his studies.

fellowships, of which 1,072 have been granted. Medicine is the predominant field. About 25 per cent of all the fellowships granted were in the fields of bacteriology, cancer, pediatrics, cardiology, general surgery, and so on. Next, in order of those granted, were social sciences, economics, agriculture, education, law, art, literature, and other disciplines.

#### What Is the Professorships Program?

Also included in the OAS Fellowships Program, which was called for by Resolution XXII of the Committee of Presidential Representatives, is the Professorships Program, designed to provide special visiting professors for universities and institutions in the Americas.

Here again the Advisory Board is called upon to evaluate the professors and the universities' needs. Currently there are requests for thirty-eight professors to teach in twelve countries. Some of the professorships have already been filled by prominent educators from the United States and Europe. The Advisory Board must decide whether the professor sought has the necessary qualifications for the center that is seeking him. Its decision is based on several considerations, for a professor who is not well qualified would be out of place in an institution with a high level of instruction, and, on the other hand, a university lacking laboratories or well-prepared students could not hope to attract a highly qualified professor.

The OAS fellows have already acquired a great measure of prestige in the American countries, for many of them have become outstanding in their own fields. Medicine, economics, the arts, and the sciences are all now receiving a valuable impetus from OAS fellows who have returned to their own countries. The Secretary General, and those who work with him to make the Program function well and maintain its high standards, always have in mind, when they grant a fellowship, that the applicant must be worthy of adding to his professional title that of "OAS Fellow." ☛



Three OAS fellows are in this group of graduate students of agricultural economics at Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Turrialba, Costa Rica

# THE PARCHED LAND:

## NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL



CLÓVIS CALDEIRA

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE Brazilian Northeast, as is often said today because of the variety of conditions to be observed in that region. Studies of the area reveal some striking contrasts in physical, social, and economic features.

The patriarchal past of the sugar cane Northeast was studied exhaustively by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre in his well-known work *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*). Other writers, his disciples, developed other aspects or phases of the subject. The pastoral Northeast was studied by Djacir Menezes, who emphasized the marked contrast between the two parallel types of social organization that have developed. His book, entitled *O Outro Nordeste* (*The Other Northeast*), discusses the predominant activity of a large part of the northeastern interior. Of course, he did not imply that the only con-

trast was that between stock raising and sugar cane cultivation. In addition to these two Northeasters there are others: the Northeast of the small primitive farms, of coastal and lake fishing, of the saltworks, the coastal coconut plantations, or the areas where wild vegetable products are gathered, to cite some of the more impressive examples.

To these contributions, supplemented in part by the accounts of the chroniclers of the colonial era, by descrip-

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CLÓVIS CALDEIRA, a Brazilian statistician, was born in Bahia and is an expert on the problems of the northeastern part of the country. Currently in charge of information and exchange of technical publications for the National Statistical Council of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, he has participated in several international conferences dealing with land problems, and published books on that subject.



*Drought Polygon, the colored area on this map, covers most of Brazilian Northeast*

tions written by foreign travelers, and by studies done by native Northeasterners or persons who went there to settle, one must now add a technical bibliography. Some recently published studies have resulted from systematic regional research programs, or from the requirements for economic and social planning.

According to a well-known classification, the Northeast is composed of three principal areas: the humid coastal area, where sugar cane cultivation became entrenched in colonial times; the *agreste*, or area of bare rocky soil, with less precipitation, where the chief crops are grains and other kinds of foodstuffs; and the semi-arid *sertão* hinterland, a favorite place for stock raising. This rough division does not give the full picture. The Northeast also has hills and humid valleys, areas that lie like verdant islands in the midst of the semi-arid zone or in the transition belts, and innumerable microclimatic areas that result from the conjunction of natural factors. Some points in the coastal area show the characteristics of the semi-arid zone; there the semi-arid zone extends to the shores of the Atlantic. And the hinterland is not all devoted to livestock raising; in certain latitudes crops that do well in a dry hot climate are raised, such as tree cotton, and even grains and root crops. Seen in this way, the Northeast has no rigid frontiers; it encompasses various economies and diverse human elements.

However, one should not look upon the Northeast as a number of distinct environments. A careful and thorough study of the area will reveal a dominant physiognomy, a system of relationships among the various zones, common cultural traits, and problems that directly or indirectly affect all the inhabitants. Taken as a whole, they make up and explain the so-called Northeast complex.

For statistical and geographical purposes, the Northeast consists of the seven states of Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Piauí, and Maranhão, covering an area of almost 375,000 square miles. However, most studies of the climate, soil, vegetation, and economy of the region exclude Maranhão because it resembles the North, and add appreciable semi-arid parts of the states of Sergipe, Bahia, and a bit of Minas Gerais. In this case the concept of the Northeast loses its strict geographical connotation, but is enlarged on the basis of incontrovertible physical and socio-economic reality.

### The Drought Polygon

This area is designated by federal law as the Drought Polygon, and today there are reasons to fear that the area of the Polygon is going to increase. In view of man's wanton inroads on natural resources, the climate of the Northeast is slowly but surely spreading to other latitudes. Today droughts have not only become more serious within the region itself, but have also affected sizable numbers of human beings in the northern part of the East. There can be no disguising the seriousness of this situation: An area larger than Portugal, Spain, and Italy combined is scourged from time to time by prolonged droughts and chronically suffers from a number of limitations on the utilization of its land.

The area subject in whole or in part to the effects of the droughts covers 326,085 square miles, or about 10 per cent of the national territory. The effects of the prolonged dry periods reach into 418 counties. Of Ceará's seventy-nine counties, only one lies outside the Polygon.

Despite its semi-arid condition, the region shows an impressively large population; 12,627,404 persons were counted there in the 1950 census, almost one fourth of the total population of Brazil at that time. The population density there was about twice the national average.

The soils of the Polygon area are shallow and only slightly permeable. Although chemically rich, they do not absorb sufficient water to dissolve enough of their salts. Thomaz Pompeu de Souza Brasil, whose name is linked to the earliest serious studies of the Northeast, came to

*Fishermen's homes on the coast in Pernambuco State*





the conclusion, based on observations made in twelve hydrological basins of the region, that 16 per cent of the area's precipitation returns to the sea, carried by rivers; 80 per cent goes back into the atmosphere through evaporation; and only 4 per cent filters into the soil.

However, the unsuitability of the Northeastern soils for agriculture has been exaggerated. The economist T. Pompeu Accioly Borges writes that in general the fertility of the soils of the Northeast is comparable to that of other regions of the country, and at times the soils there produce greater yields per acre than do those in other states of greater total production. But the income per acre rarely approaches the national average, a fact that is explained by the low commercial value of certain commodities that are used in large part for consumption by the farmer himself. The amount of food produced, not the productivity of the land, may be considered low.

The Brazilian agronomist Guimarães Duque, who has made some outstanding studies on the drought area, points out the following characteristic ecological zones: *caatinga*, stunted sparse forest land; *sertão*, semi-arid grassland; *seridó*, the cotton-growing zone in Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte; *agreste*, a zone of bare rocky soil; *carrasco*, an area of sparse stunted vegetation, marking a transition zone between the *caatinga* and the grassland; and *serra*, highlands. The vegetation found in each of these areas is adapted to the conditions of light, water, soil, and climate. Not without grave consequences can the balance between the environment and man be broken. If it is, the problems that stem principally from a defective social and economic organization are aggravated.

#### A Tradition of Drought

The pages of history picture an appalling tradition of drought throughout all of that extensive area, with the reports going back to the time of the earliest settlements. The chroniclers of the colonial era, priests, military officers, and governors all referred to the destructive effects of the prolonged droughts. During the first half of the seventeenth century, a great drought all but crushed the people of the Bahia hinterland. "Harassed by hunger,"

*Transporting fibers of agave, new crop in Northeast*



states a chronicler of the time, "many of them offered themselves as slaves in exchange for a dish of meal."

In 1711 a great drought extended from Bahia to the extreme Northeast, spreading hunger among the inhabitants of the interior. Eleven years later, in 1722, another drought descended upon the region. A historian relates that during that scourge, numerous native tribes were decimated and the livestock all perished. Even wild animals and birds were found dead on all sides.

Other droughts, in a tragic succession that seems to be cyclical, have racked the land and its people in the course of time. Among those that had the most terrible consequences was the drought of 1877 in Ceará, the so-called "drought of the two sevens," when the roads were strewn with human skeletons. In Fortaleza, the capital of the state, where people fled in great numbers to escape the drought, thousands, already weakened, fell easy prey to disease and died.

In subsequent times new droughts have occurred, although with less extensive and less disastrous effects on the people themselves, because the highways enable the people to move with relative ease and to flee from calamity. The roads constructed there over a period of several years by labor recruited in the backlands during critical periods also serve as escape routes for thousands of persons who migrate to other points both within and outside the region.

The official policy of assistance to the victims and of drought control and prevention has given rise to many abuses. A distinguished Brazilian writer and journalist, Antonio Callado, has recently published in book form a series of excellent reports in which he exposes the existence of a well-organized, efficient, and prosperous "drought industry." Callado declares that traditionally there have been persons in the Northeast who have filled their pockets from government aid funds, reaping political and electoral advantages through alarmist campaigns based on the question of droughts and floods—campaigns promoted and carried out by themselves—and, what is worse, who have not had the least interest in the solution of the problems.

*Saltworks in Aracati, Ceará State*



Aside from a few fruitless attempts to combat the droughts in the second half of the last century, effective official action in the matter began during the first decade of this century. In the subsequent phase, which comes up to the present, great public dams that are a credit to national engineering skill have been and are being built. But because of the lack of careful planning or the inability of governments to stand up to powerful interests, the public authorities constructed these works without expropriating the land they irrigate. The result—an account of which appears in a document published by an official agency—has been completely negative. These colossal projects, which ought to be the best guarantee for the life of the people who live in the Polygon, serve only an insignificant number of landowners, and even they are served in an unreliable manner.

As a rule the lands adjacent to the public dams acquire a high commercial value and become the object of speculation. The same happens with the farm lands watered by the irrigation ditches, which generally are poorly used. Furthermore, the dams constructed with government cooperation, as well as the artesian wells, are in the hands of large or medium landowners. These benefits don't reach the great majority of small farmers, who have neither financial resources nor influence with and access to the authorities for obtaining government aid.

It has been stated that the improper or inefficient use

*Recife, capital of Pernambuco, grew 51 per cent between 1950 and 1960, has large influx of migrants*



*Carnauba tree is source of wax, fibers, and thatching for roofs. Family processes leaves by hand*

of water for agricultural purposes in the lands served by the dams and irrigation ditches is due to the lack of a cultural tradition of using irrigation, to the ignorance of the proper techniques, and to the absence of any spirit of cooperation among the landowners. This may be true, to some extent. But in rebuttal we should note that in the Cariri hills, a zone of small landowners and farmers located right in the Northeast, the water that flows down the hillsides has been used from time immemorial, its distribution being regulated by local custom.

The Polygon has been called a problem area, especially its climate, but this also affects economic and social life. Crises of production and employment are common during droughts and at times reach great proportions. Following the great drought that struck the Northeast in 1958, particularly Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, and Piauí, the per capita income in the Northeast was cut by 15 per cent. In Ceará the decrease amounted to 40 per cent.

### **The Economic Structure**

The Northeast has an economic structure typical of any underdeveloped region. In 1950, 4,697,000 persons, some 75 per cent of the economically active population of the region, were engaged in activities either directly or indirectly connected with the land. This extraordinary importance of agriculture is characteristic of regions whose economy is at an elementary stage. Another factor is technical backwardness, apparent in workaday farm practices, in the waste of natural resources, and in the almost exclusive use of hand labor methods.

Except for the growing and processing of sugar cane in the coastal zone, which makes a fair use of technical knowledge and equipment, and a few commercial farming enterprises, such as the production of tomatoes in the *agreste* area of Pernambuco, where machinery and soil conservation practices are employed, crops are grown in the centuries-old primitive manner. Over the years this style of agricultural operation has tended to increase the effect of aridity. The devastating impact of the drought is also expanding into the *caatinga* and *carrasco* sections of the region and impairing stock production there.

The bulk of the food crops—corn, beans, rice, manioc—is grown on the so-called primitive farms by small landowners, tenant farmers, share-croppers, and the like. Only

a small proportion of the irrigated land is used for the production of food crops. In some places food crops are grown along with cotton on a share-cropping basis.

The circumstance that an overwhelming majority of the people engage in farming and stockraising takes on added importance in the light of the 1950 census figures, which show that close to four million of them do not own land. This fact should be noted well. Throughout all the region a considerable mass of human beings are compelled, if they are to survive, to lease out the work of their hands or to share with landowners the scanty yields obtained under the tenant, share-cropper, and other similar systems. In the area as a whole, only some 12 per cent of the farmers are property owners, less than the 14 per cent shown for all Brazil. In Maranhão, for example, the figure drops to about 7 per cent. Only in Ceará, with 14 per cent, and Pernambuco, with 13.7 per cent, is the average higher than it is for the region as a whole.

Not only is the land distribution socially unjust; it also presents some shocking disparities. There are enormously large estates and properties so small that they cannot support a family, two sides of the same problem.

#### Concentration of the Land

Let us look at the figures. In 1950, 2 per cent of the



*Agave plantation near Sertânia, Pernambuco*

*Carnauba leaves are dried in open field*



*Jaguaribe River in Ceará is reduced to small pools during prolonged dry periods*

farms were 500 hectares (1,236 acres) or larger, and these occupied 48 per cent of the farm area. At the same time, farms of less than 50 hectares (123 acres), which accounted for 76 per cent of the total number of farms, amounted to only 14 per cent of the farm area.

The tendency toward breaking up the land into extremely small parcels increased between 1940 and 1950. The number of rural holdings of less than 5 hectares (12 acres), which in 1940 amounted to 182,000, or 28 per cent, increased in the following ten years to 261,000, or 35 per cent. Simultaneously with the increase in the number of small holdings, the average size of properties, that is, the index of landownership concentration, increased. A study of this aspect of the situation led a sociologist, José Arthur Rios, to write that "the agricultural pyramid in the Northeast shows a concentration of landownership that may be considered critical." He came to that conclusion after an analysis of the distribution of farm and livestock establishments in various political subdivisions of the region. In the State of Maranhão more than 60 per cent of the total area of rural properties—and those who read this may well be astounded—is taken up with farms of between 1,000 and 100,000 hectares (2,471 and 247,104 acres). One single property covers 2 per cent of the area. T. Pompeu Accioly Borges also remarks that the degree of landownership concentration, estimated for the Northeast on the basis of the index proposed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini, is 0.80, one of the highest in the world. (In the Gini index, zero represents a completely equal distribution and one represents a situation where all the land is in the hands of one person.)

One would think that the problem of the concentration of land in the hands of a few would be less serious in states with lower population density, such as Maranhão, and even in Piauí, the latter having a density of less than thirteen inhabitants per square mile. But in Maranhão itself, where the density is little greater than it is in Piauí, a potentially explosive situation exists, the result of a system of squatter occupation of public lands that arouses strong tension between small farmers and those who claim to own the land.





*Erosion must be stopped if yields are to improve. Farm in Arcoverde County, Pernambuco*

A new crop, agave, was introduced some years ago into the agricultural picture of the Northeast; it is being developed especially in the marshlands of Paraíba. In districts where typical small food-producing farms were formerly prevalent, these have given way to large estates engaged in the cultivation and industrialization of this fiber plant.

#### **Migration Movements**

One of the characteristics of the Northeast area is the great mobility of its population, especially the rural people, a phenomenon in which the droughts play only an episodic and accessory part. In the past, this extraordinary mobility led for many years to the migration of contingents of Northeasterners to the Amazon region, to work as rubber-gatherers. In modern times, it has produced a Brazilian social type marked, as José Arthur Rios puts it, with the *pau-de-arara* [a tree whose bark yields red dye-

*Sugar has long been a major commodity in Northeast. Mill in Crato, Ceará*



stuff], or in other words, a Northeasterner who has migrated to the south and west-central parts of the country.

The migration movements within the country show an appreciable negative balance for the Northeast region, as may be seen in the difference between the number of Northeasterners living in other regions and the number of people from other areas living in the Northeast. The 1950 census showed that 576,000 more people had left the region than had come there.

The increase in the region's population has been less rapid than that of other parts of the country, as a result of these constant outflowing currents. Between 1872 and 1950 the increase was only 303.84 per cent, while for Brazil as a whole it was 414 per cent. In the same period the South showed an increase of 982.01 per cent. Except for the North, the Northeast is the least attractive to strangers; the total number coming to the entire region in 1950 was less than 10,000.

Contrary to what might be supposed, the largest contingents of emigrating Northeasterners do not come from the semi-arid part but from the humid districts of the forest area, where there is a heavy concentration of population. The bulk of the migrants are of rural origin, although they are joined by large numbers from the poverty-stricken classes of the small cities, towns, and villages.

A survey made by the National Agrarian Policy Commission in 1953 revealed that of the total of 1,455 counties that showed a loss of manpower because of migration, 1,007 reported that the reason for the exodus was the low wages paid to rural workers. A large part of these districts are in the Northeast.

In fact, the low level of per capita income is one of the factors underlying the migrations. It is reported in the First Guiding Plan for Development of the Northeast, issued by the Superintendency of Development of the Northeast (SUDENE), that the Northeast area's share in the national income, which was 17.1 per cent in 1948, dropped to 15.3 per cent in 1957 and further declined to 14.5 per cent the following year. In that year, 1958, the per capita income in the Northeast was less than one third the figure for the South.

Of course these migrations would not be possible, at least not in their present volume, were it not for the existence of a demand for labor in other rural areas, especially in the great urban centers, both within and outside the region. Moreover, it should be remembered that although the migratory current flows chiefly toward the south of the country and, in recent years, to the west-central region, there is intensive intra-regional migration, including that which streams toward the urban centers. It is estimated that 39 per cent of the total volume of migration takes place within the region itself. In three states, Alagoas, Paraíba, and Rio Grande do Norte, the percentage of migrants is more than 50 per cent.

The exodus toward the labor markets is reflected in the breakdown of the population according to sex. In 1950 there were 346,362 less men than women, a much more marked difference than that shown on the national

level. Thus, while for Brazil as a whole the proportion between the sexes is 49.9 per cent for men and 50.1 per cent for women, in the Northeast the figures are 48.6 and 51.4, respectively.

The heavy increase in the population of certain capital cities of the Northeast shows that it is not merely a natural increase but that it comes in large part from the migrations. In the period 1940-50, the urban population in the Northeast grew almost twice as fast as the rural population. The prospects are that if the tendency toward urbanization continues, in the not distant future the net increase in the labor force will be distributed in equal proportions between the urban and rural areas.

If preliminary data on the population of Brazilian capital cities are confirmed, Recife, capital of Pernambuco, will show an increase of nearly 51 per cent for the decade 1950-60. The population of 524,682 in that important economic and social center increased by 1960 to 788,580. The relative increase attributed to Fortaleza, capital of Ceará, is even higher—from 270,169 to 514,828 inhabitants, or an increase of about 91 per cent.

The movement of large numbers of people to the urban centers in general, although it has some undeniably positive aspects, is not counterbalanced by technological improvements in the areas they leave behind. Technological advances in agriculture are quite slow.

Strong opposition to the migration movements may be observed among Northeastern employers of rural labor. In this respect two contrasting positions may be pointed out: the position of Northeastern employers, who dramatize the consequences of their loss of manpower, and that of employers in the South, who benefit from the Northeastern labor force and who consequently have never been heard to say a word against the migration. The exodus of Northeasterners toward other regions has been an escape valve for a situation that otherwise would long since have become explosive.

#### Corollary Problems

The extraordinary concentration of people in the urban



Fisherman in Rio Grande do Norte uses light but sturdy raft



Ranch hand resting on hammock in Bahia cattle country looks very much like those described in Euclides da Cunha's classic novel of the Northeast, *Os Sertões*

centers of the Northeast, which can be explained only by the relatively increased activity in the industrial and service sectors of the economy, generates complex problems in relation to housing, food supply, transportation, and other requirements, and in some cases gives rise to a surplus of unabsorbed manpower. The latter is not so great, however, as some might imagine, and a situation of underemployment is more common.

The consequences of the flow of migrants to the great centers are, by all indications, particularly felt by the population that has always lived there. To the man who leaves the interior, fleeing from the inhuman conditions on the latifundios—a man toughened by privation but still stalwart of soul—even without the guarantee of permanent employment, city life must seem incomparably less ungrateful than that in his original environment. A few days of work provide him with more than he gets for a whole month of drudgery on the farm. Nonetheless, this highly accelerated urbanization brings problems that are a real headache for the authorities.

The Northeast is conspicuous for the importance of agriculture in its economic picture as the form of activity that engages the largest number of people, and for its only slightly developed industry. Actually, in 1950, more than one third—35.9 per cent—of the total population was engaged in agriculture, stockraising, and forestry, a high figure in comparison with the 27 per cent shown for the country as a whole. Industrial activities accounted for no more than 2.3 per cent, a considerably lower figure than that shown for all Brazil.

Further evidence of the state of underdevelopment in the Northeast is the low level of literacy. The census figures show that only 25.2 per cent of the population of five years of age and over know how to read and

write. This is equivalent to saying that the rate of illiteracy for the total population is 81.2 per cent, which is high in comparison with the national rate of 57.2 per cent. Among persons ten years of age and above, only 4.47 per cent have gone through primary school, 1.0 per cent have had secondary schooling, and 0.14 per cent higher education. It is clear that economic progress must be accompanied by educational progress, not merely spontaneously but with assistance. But this process will take on real impetus only when there is an increase in the productivity of those sectors, as occurred in various countries during the past century.

The educational problem is particularly somber in the rural areas. There are few schools and these in general are poorly distributed. Even when they are available, however, they cannot always be regularly attended. Among the causes of non-attendance are the lack of clothing and books, the distance the children would have to travel, and above all, the fact that the youngsters have to help the family on the farm. The poverty of the majority of the rural population is the greatest obstacle to education. Work and school are irreconcilable because of the practical impossibility of dissociating the school year from the agricultural year. The harvest season, in particular, is an operation that demands the help of the child as a part of the family unit.

Furthermore, the quality of the instruction is poor, and this is not in the least helped by the unattractive pay offered rural teachers, the parents' lack of interest and their skepticism regarding the type of instruction given, and the mobility of the people themselves.

The birth and death rates in the region are quite high, another characteristic of underdevelopment. According to estimates made by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the annual rate of live births varies between 45 and 48 per 1,000 inhabitants in the various states of the Northeast, while the death rate varies from 18 to 23 per 1,000.

With such a situation, it is not surprising that the Northeast is faced with the challenge of hunger and is today talking of solutions that may surprise those who, with their eyes closed to this crushing situation, insist on viewing the problem of land and man as a *tabula rasa*.

In its plans for the development of the Northeast, the SUDENE recognizes that there is an unmet demand for food. This compels the region to resort to imports, which in the end means high price levels, while regional production fails to react with enough elasticity to take advantage of the incentive of the demand. On the other hand, the SUDENE, in land policy, does not go beyond a recognition of the need to increase offers of available lands. It recognizes the presence in the Northeast of an "anachronistic agrarian structure"—and let us commend the accuracy of the diagnosis—but in the last analysis its Guiding Plan is limited to the programming of investments in infrastructure projects and the planning of measures to encourage individual initiative. It is based on the supposition that industrialization by itself will bring a positive response from agriculture, and that this will transform the economic and social situation.

The "available lands" to which the Plan refers must be those that exist in Maranhão, the extent of which not even the State itself knows.

There are aspects of landownership in the Northeast that belong in a chapter on social pathology. Granted so many negative conditions, it is not surprising that such movements as the Farm Workers Leagues should flourish there. The Leagues represent an attempt to give active expression to the discontent that exists among the landless rural element, subject to a system no different from those that by law or custom, in the past, bound man to the soil.

In this outline of the problems of the Northeast it is inappropriate to pass judgment on this movement. But let it be made clear that it is made possible only by the inhuman characteristics of a system of human relationships that has become historically outmoded. ☛

Fibers are stripped from caroa leaves at this plant in Sertânia, Pernambuco







LUIS ALBERTO SÁNCHEZ

EUROPEANS FIRST SET FOOT on what was later to be known as America, in 1492. The first voyages by Columbus and his contemporaries were more in the nature of exploration than conquest. The royal army and navy took little or no part in them. They were private undertakings, sometimes made official merely for international purposes. Actually, the conquests by Spanish *caudillos*, the "penetration" by the Portuguese *bandeirantes*, the deeds of the Pilgrim Fathers on the eastern coast of what was to become the United States and of the *coureurs de bois* in Canada were carried out almost exclusively at the initiative of a single man or a group of private individuals. This was also the way the Pacific Ocean and the Strait of Magellan were discovered. Around 1530, the first stage in the establishment of the European in America may be considered ended.

Campaigns were immediately launched in three directions: explorers pushed inland, taking possession of new lands; missionaries endeavored to win the souls of idol-worshippers; and colleges and universities were founded, in a desire to win minds and train them in order to produce a governing elite, whether it were a Spanish elite transposed to the New World (and this could be applied, with appropriate changes, to the other parts of the Hemisphere), mestizo, or creole. America awakened to Western thought through its universities.

There is some question about which was the first university to be founded. Some maintain that the first one was that in Hispaniola, that is, Santo Domingo, founded in 1539, nearly one hundred years before Harvard. However, it is argued that it was not a royal university, complete and with full rights, but a pontifical university, and therefore incomplete. The University of

*This is the first of a series of four articles on the university in Latin America, by LUIS ALBERTO SÁNCHEZ, rector of the university of San Marcos in Lima, Peru. Author of some forty books, including La Universidad Latinoamericana, he was co-founder of the Union of Latin American Universities, and a member of the OAS group of experts that prepared a report on higher education in Latin America.*

# THE UNIVERSITY IN LATIN AMERICA: PART I

## The Colonial Period

San Marcos was established by royal decree on May 12, 1551. In September of that year, both San Marcos and the University of Mexico opened their doors. We know that by 1600 the University of Córdoba already existed. These dates serve only to prove one thing, that is, that between 1539 and 1560, less than a century after the arrival of Europeans in the New World, several universities were already functioning. Priests of the Dominican and Jesuit orders competed in founding institutions of learning. Often they got in each other's way, as happened in Guatemala. At any rate, the fact remains that the universities were founded by religious orders, and therefore the first schools were schools of theology and arts, where philosophy was taught. Schools of law and medicine came later.

It should be pointed out here that, at the same time and even earlier, printing shops were established in the New World. Antonio Ricardo, an Italian printer, opened his shop in Mexico in 1538. In 1581 he moved to Lima, and in 1584 he published the first book printed in Lima. Harvard, the oldest of the U.S. universities, was not founded until 1636. It was followed by William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, and King's College (today Columbia), also governed by religious principles. The various Protestant denominations had to raise the standards of their ministers or missionaries and so opened universities. In both the Americas, the origin of universities is related to religious beliefs. Secularization, although it was not long in coming, came later.

The theological character of the universities is significant. Those were times of solid religious training. Science and letters centered around the idea of God. It was like an extension of the Middle Ages, with medieval men. The university became identified with the general philosophy prevailing at the time. And although, in Hispanic America, there were disputes among philosophical schools (followers of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, and Suárez), they were all only slightly different versions of Scholasticism. The same thing happened in the North. Although some colleges were Presbyterian,

Sixteenth century  
university graduation.  
From *De Officiis*  
de Ciceron



others Quaker, and others Puritan, the fact is that they were all based on the common idea of the Reformation, and therefore, were anti-Roman, that is to say, not Catholic, although they were Christian.

University life in the time of the viceroys had two more characteristics, in addition to the identification of the university with King and God (I am the State). The first, in Hispanic America, was the influence of the Italian university (Bologna, and Padua), via the University of Salamanca; and in the North, the influence of the University of Paris, via its reflections in Oxford and Cambridge. The second was the fusion of ecclesiastical power, cultural power, and political power. When the cultural aspect became secular the joint rule of the university and the viceroy became more closely knit and more vigorous.

The Salamanca traditions were the dominant influence on the first constitutions of Latin American universities. They belonged to the state, were autonomous, and enjoyed many privileges; they were more democratic than the University of Paris, had student participation in their government, tax exemption, and a complicated hierarchy of doctors and professors. The universities in the United States were characterized more by the rule of the respective denomination or sect, which gave their autonomy rather the nature of a free, private enterprise, as distinct from the autonomy within a public official regime that marked the South.

When one thinks about these aspects of the early university organization in the Americas, one begins to understand some of the differences and to strip them of the excessive importance surrounding them today. There were inevitable historical and psychological consequences that are self-evident. This explains the role played by universities in colonial life.

There was never a viceroy who, upon assuming office, did not receive an accolade from the university, in a ceremony that had two aspects, one, serious and circumstantial, the other, almost jocular. The viceroy and the archbishop participated in university affairs on an equal footing with the rector. The other authorities did not have access to the university holy of holies. Not the mayor or the marshal. The supreme authority of the colony was tricephalous: Viceroy, Archbishop, and Rector, or we might equally well say, Power, Dogma, and Wisdom. The university was so highly respected that asylum was given there to fugitives as if it were a foreign nation or a temple.

Freedom of conscience was respected as much as today, if not more so. The plurality of chairs of philosophy, representing different systems, in an era when philosophy was the handmaiden of theology, would be

equivalent to a modern university where all religions might be studied in its theological school, and all social doctrines in its sociology department. Such liberalism does not exist today. The colonial university was more broad-minded than the contemporary university in many respects. A single episode will suffice to prove this: In 1791, the new Viceroy, Agustín de Jauregui, arrived in Lima. The rebel Tupac Amaru had just been conquered, and the Spanish authorities tortured him frightfully, along with his wife, brother, and youngest son. Winds of discontent—worse yet, of revolution—were blowing. During the ceremony at San Marcos, Dr. José de Baquijano y Carrillo, a professor and the owner of several plantations, in delivering the address of welcome, extolled the creoles, deplored the unequal status in which they were living, and emphasized that they had equal rights with the Spaniards. For twenty years no charge was brought against him. Only under different circumstances a quarter of a century later did Carrillo suffer persecution for the cause of freedom.

Moreover, a certain sense of unity began to appear. As early as the sixteenth century, we see that Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz in Mexico corresponded with the Count of Granja, whom we assume to be the one in Caracas, and not the one who, a century later, sang to Santa Rosa in Lima. There are indications that there were some acquaintances among university personalities, like that between Pedro Peralta y Barnuevo, of Lima, and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, of Mexico. Since the seventeenth century there had been books in circulation—printed in South American shops—like the book by the Italian physician Bottoni on the circulation of the blood, which contained statements that could have led him to the same fate as Miguel Servet. Books prohibited by the Inquisition were permitted in professors' libraries. Moreover, these prohibited books were allowed to be brought into American territory on ships controlled by church and political officials. This was true of *Amadis de Gaula* and many others, according to research done by Irving A. Leonard and José Torres Revello, among others.

The university was a center of freedom of conscience and scientific curiosity. The first professorships, almost all held by Spanish churchmen, were secularized at the end of the sixteenth century, and they began to be open to creoles in the following century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the majority of the professors were creole, instead of from Spain.

The viceroys, in performing their duties, took fully into account their university advisers. The above-mentioned rectors—Sigüenza of Mexico and Peralta of Lima—are sufficient to illustrate my point. They were not the only ones. The viceroys were proud of being connected with the halls of learning. The importance of this was evident. One of the greatest celebrations, the most important civic events during the colonial era, was the ceremony of conferring the degree of doctor. In honor of this event, there were solemn processions through the city, the oath was administered at the Cathedral, and a bullfight was held in the main plaza,

all at the expense of the graduate. The whole neighborhood was stirred up by each doctorate granted. The university thus received the support of the people.

The role of the university was such that it even participated in defense plans. Not only did it stimulate the talents of the theologians and jurists, but it fostered the many activities peculiar to an institution of learning, that is, meditation, verification, and research. Since the religious orders included the best-trained men of that time, they had a great influence on the university, but even more on the *colegios mayores*, which still exist in the university organization of Madrid and from which the Anglo-Saxon "colleges" are derived.

As a matter of fact, the religious orders had created and maintained the so-called *colegios mayores*, *colegios máximos*, or *colegios reales*. They were institutions that bore a certain similarity to the British "college." Actually, the university was made up, although not directly, of these colleges. The Jesuits of Lima, for example, had the College of San Felipe, which is where the School of Law of the University of San Marcos is operating today, and the San Pablo College, which is where the National Library in Lima is now housed. These colleges were abandoned in 1767 when the Jesuit Order was expelled from the domain of Charles III. That was when, with the remnants of these colleges, other colleges, governed by laymen or by religious of other orders and of typically Leibnitzian and Baconian inspiration, were established under the name of San Carlos, in honor of the King who protected them.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the trend in the universities and *colegios mayores* had altered and reached a critical point. Scholasticism was beating a retreat. The disturbance to philosophy caused by the activity of Bacon and Leibnitz, on the one hand, and of Grotius and, later, Helvetius, on the other hand, had changed the intellectual picture. The first cries of the Enlightenment had crossed the Pyrenees. As Jean Sarrailh notes in his magnificent book on this period in Hispanic thought, the impact of Rationalism was greater than that of many wars and revolutions. The "Age of Reason" had begun.

That was when the Royal Decree was issued expelling the Jesuits from Spain and its possessions, which coincided with the order issued for the same purpose by the governments of France and Portugal. The Jesuits abandoned their numerous, splendid institutions of learning. The natural reaction was the establishment then of the numerous colleges or *convictorios* of San Carlos, where the teaching was completely different from that in the *colegios mayores* of the Jesuits. Almost all the great figures of American Independence were students in those

*convictorios*. They learned to *reason* rather than *believe*; to *investigate* rather than *accept*.

Reading had a great influence on this change. If we examine the documents on this point made available to us by the research of Leonard and Torres Revello, and the immense wealth of material supplied by the bibliographies of the indefatigable Chilean José Toribio Medina (1852-1930), we obtain some idea of the about-face that occurred at the beginning of the final third of the eighteenth century. We can also observe something that destroys many myths about that period, created by the phantasy of William Robertson. The Church, although it was formally closed against invasion by an unorthodox book or thought, was in practice quite tolerant. Just as in the sixteenth century it permitted "imaginative books," in particular *Amadis de Gaula*, to enter America although considered harmful reading by the King, so in the eighteenth century it permitted some of its most illustrious men to bring into the New World books written by the French Encyclopedists. Thus, the private library of the Hieronymite monk Diego Cisneros, who arrived in Lima during the reign of Charles IV, and who had been the father confessor of Queen María Luisa, contained works by Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Montesquieu, d'Holbach—that is to say, the elite of heresy, heterodoxy, and rationalism. Father Cisneros was a professor at the *convictorio* of San Carlos, which was the real university of Lima between the years 1777 and 1800, despite the fact that the university of San Marcos continued to function, although at a slow, completely anachronistic pace.

The names of founders of our republics—Manuel Belgrano and Mariano Moreno, in Argentina; Vicente Rocafuerte and José Joaquín de Olmedo, in Ecuador; Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza, Mariano José de Arce, and Faustino Sánchez Carrión, in Peru; Camilo Henríquez and José Egaña, in Chile; Tadeo Lozano, Francisco Zea, J. J. de Caldas, Antonio Nariño, and Francisco de Paula Santander, in Colombia; and we could go on enumerating a great many more for each and every one of the new countries that arose from the Spanish hegemony—indicate how profound was the impact of the university on the public life of Latin America. So much so that it can be safely said that 90 per cent of the political, social, intellectual, and religious leaders from this part of the world were born, grew up, matured, and achieved their success in and from the university. They were the ones who molded the public life of our nations. And so, we cannot ignore the history and activity of the university when we study political history and action. Not then, not, as we shall see, afterward, and not today. ☞







# THROUGH *the Air...*

A short story by **CECILIA PRADA**

Illustrated by **BARBARA H. BOWES**

NOW I KNOW who killed my son. It wasn't Jack the Ripper, or the government, or a monster with huge bloody claws. Now I'm sure; it was the man who lives across the street, no one else. That tall man with gray-ing hair, with intensely blue eyes behind his metal-rimmed spectacles. He is retired, and lives with his wife in that very clean and tidy house. He waters the garden every morning; in the summer he even cuts the grass twice a week. And that anonymous letter I received a while ago, calling my attention to the unkempt grass in my yard "whose appearance downgrades the value of the other houses in the neighborhood"—I'm sure it came from him. But aside from that, he is a very pleasant and courteous man who always tips his hat when he meets me in the street. And in the afternoon, when he sits on the porch to read the newspapers, he even exchanges a few words about the weather with me and the

other neighbors. On Sundays, without fail, rain or shine, he and his wife, well-dressed, leave the house to attend eleven o'clock mass at the Cathedral.

But he was the one who killed my son. It was he, I'm sure of it. Once I even stopped in front of his house—he was sitting in the sun on the porch—and stared him straight in the face, to see if that would make him betray himself at last. But no. Perhaps the anguish in my face, now so thin and drawn, meant nothing to him (once I was very pretty, you know, and so young, so gay . . . but after little Fernando died . . .). Or, more probably, he understood well enough but he masked it behind his blue stare, blue like the sky, startled perhaps behind the spectacles, and, to complete the pretense, two quizzical wrinkles furrowed his brow. Cynical, cynical.

I knew that in his mind he was defending himself, entrenched behind a solid wall of arguments, and he was saying to me—with a very evil inner laugh that, if it came to the surface, would certainly dissolve the purity of those blue eyes into poisonous blood—that I could never prove anything, anything at all. He had been there in the garden all the time, watering the flowers, or reading the newspapers on the porch, or in church with his wife. How could he have done it? And besides, he always paid all his taxes, even the income tax on his retirement pay—wasn't it all rather absurd? And oh yes, besides that he had once jumped into the ocean to save the life of a child! I could easily see it was all a ridiculous figment of my imagination, understandable, of course, in a "poor mother who has seen her little son slowly wasting away," a "poor woman who has suffered such a terrible misfortune," and so on. And where is the evidence, where? "Was there a hole dug in the back yard to bury the murder victim?" the Chief of Police asked me, ticking off the list on his fat fingers. "Ground glass in the food? Traces of blood on the lawn? (No, not that, I thought at once, he takes such good care of the grass!) Poison, a knife, a rope, or strangling hands, or even a brutal kick, or suffocation with a pillow (remember the little princes in the Tower of London), one of these things, in short?" No, nothing. Discouraged, I dropped my arms. No, I couldn't supply a single specific detail—no evidence, coincidence, corpus delicti, broken alibi, nothing. And as my hands fell lifeless to my sides no one saw the half-circle they described, a gesture of pure and utter despair. Nor did anyone hear the murmured words, again only words born of despair, incomprehensible and cabalistic, falling softly and unclearly upon the ears of the Chief of Police, the detectives, the Mayor, the corner grocer, my neighbor across the street, all of them, all of them: "Through the air . . ."

Or was there a slight shudder, a small intangible presence of uneasiness in them all . . . no, no, once again my imagination, nothing more. And yet, the Chief of Police stood up (but hadn't he, in fact, a brief instant

*CECILIA PRADA, a Brazilian writer and journalist, has published a book of short stories and has contributed to many leading publications in Brazil. Now residing in Washington, D.C., she says that this story will be her first to be translated into English and circulated outside her country.*

before, run a finger between his shirt collar and his neck, a little choked, perhaps?), placed his hand on my arm, very paternally, and asked one of the detectives to take me home in a car because the day had been so distressing for me.

And the next afternoon again, I saw the very distinguished man with the graying hair (he had such a gentle, grandfatherly face), reading the afternoon papers, with his leather slippers dangling from his toes, and his pajama jacket over the old trousers he wore around the house. There he was, so calm, while I spied on him from behind the fence with malevolent eyes, so malevolent now (could he know that in days gone by I, too, had blue eyes?), my hands strong with arguments but, nevertheless, so useless. Useless too my poor tired shoulders; useless and senseless my long sleepless nights, my days filled with suffering; useless and impotent my great gray universal solitude. I see the turkey buzzards wheeling in circles at dusk (am I the only one who can see?), and the blood spurting from the mutilated faces of little children, and I hear the vast mournful wail that is so poorly concealed, by the waves, by the wind, by the dirge, by the nights, by humanity, by philanthropy ("help the poor little children of China"), by forgetfulness.

Even if I should tell everything, everything, still no one would understand. That on August 6, 1945, for example, the murderer with the blue eyes was sitting there on his porch reading the afternoon papers; and that he became absorbed in his reading, his body hunched forward—might the newspaper have trembled ever so slightly in his hand, a hand younger in those days? Then he sat still for a moment, looking at the grass in the yard; he seemed frightened for just an instant, but then his body straightened again and he sat up in the rocking chair. A good smell of roast meat came from the kitchen. There was even a note of jubilation in his voice as he shouted to his wife: "We've won the war!"

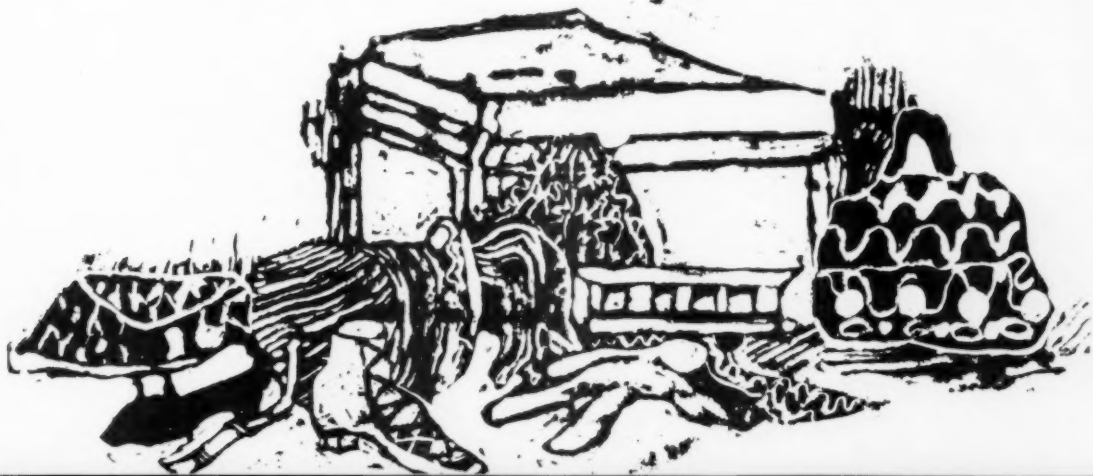
After that, there were the place names that appeared in the newspaper: Los Alamos or the Sahara desert or the California desert, and the inviting waters of Bikini, one day so troubled. Sitting in his rocking chair, he would have it (and it was as persistent as a television commercial, for the world was progressing, you could even see programs in color, just think how wonderful!), that the California desert was still indelibly associated

with nothing but sun and cactus and smiling families in convertibles drinking enormous bottles of Coca-Cola. Bikini came to mean the alluring rosy nudity of the neighbor's daughter. The Sahara desert also brought back to him the colorful pictures in children's storybooks: Arabs wrapped in flowing robes and galloping on jet black chargers.

One day he imagined himself on a street corner gesticulating a bit while conversing with a friend, and this glimpse of himself struck him with sudden horror. How was it that he, such a distinguished man. . . . For he was saying such things as: "They" are right after all; we shouldn't alarm the people; we should defend what belongs to us. . . . We cannot trust; we have no sure means of control. . . . He framed his arguments in the convincing language of the press; he was superior, he was a man who read, who was up on what was happening in the world. However, that same day he felt a little ill after dinner; could it be a symptom of high blood pressure? His wife hurried to his side solicitously with a glass of milk of magnesia, and he reflected that now he was getting old. He'd have to go easy, not argue any more; he might well have a heart attack any day. From that time on, he began to read the "Flowers and Gardens" page of the paper more carefully, to cut the grass oftener, to discover new delights in the "Religious Section" (one day he raised his finger and said: "We need God, now more than ever"), and even to become interested in the sales advertisements. "It seems silly," he commented to a friend, "but sometimes people find such good buys at sales. Look at that kitchen cupboard, for example; I bought it very cheap." He pronounced the adverb with ponderous emphasis, crediting himself with the gift of unquestionable shrewdness.

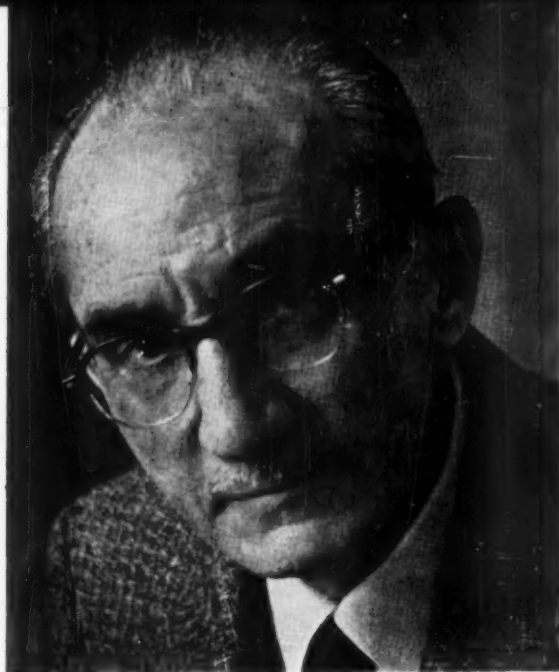
And then, one day, my son died. The doctors, with infinite despair in their tired eyes, spoke one word to me, only a single word, the same one that I, too, sick at heart, murmured at the police station, pointing my accusing finger at the man with blue eyes: "The air. . . ."

After all, everything is so vague, there is no concrete evidence, as I've already said. How can I prove my accusation? But I am positive, and as long as I live I shall cry out at the man with the blue eyes, the man with the leather slipper dangling from his big toe: "No, it wasn't the government or Jack the Ripper or a monster with huge bloody claws. No. The murderer was you!" ☹



# JORGE MAÑACH

## CUBAN MAN OF LETTERS



LUIS GUTIÉRREZ DELGADO

JORGE MAÑACH, who cultivated all prose forms, particularly the essay, was born in Sagua la Grande, Las Villas Province, Cuba, in 1898, at the end of the War of Independence; he died in exile in Puerto Rico on June 26, 1961. At his death, he left a bibliography of more than eight thousand titles.

A lawyer, doctor of philosophy, professor, journalist, and a stimulator of cultural development through his radio and television broadcasts, Jorge Mañach engaged in an incredible amount of activity in spite of his frail constitution; he even had time for political activities.

He left two unfinished posthumous works: *Historia de la Filosofía* (History of Philosophy) and *La Formación de la Conciencia Cubana* (The Formation of the Cuban Conscience), the latter a comprehensive study of Martí, begun in 1946 but subject to many interruptions. In 1956, on the eve of his trip to Europe, Mañach had resumed both these works with high enthusiasm, but on reaching Spain he became seriously ill and was unable to proceed with them.

But let us turn back to the beginning of his fruitful life. The great teacher—for he was that, even without a school—was educated in Spain, France, and the United States. He was one of the most discussed and respected writers of his generation. He was under something of an intellectual taboo; his opinion was law in matters of art

and culture, but little appreciated in politics, although he brought to that field a wealth of decency and honesty.

Mañach began his literary work about 1916 on a little high school magazine of which he was co-editor, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His first writings were in the English language, but he thought and felt in Spanish. There he published his first short story, "Little Dieho," a highly touching work.

About 1920 he began to send contributions from the United States to the magazine *Bohemia*, of Havana—translations of Oscar Wilde, short stories, art and book criticism, and nostalgic articles.

In 1922, he sent some material from Paris that, as he said, received the blessing of José Ignacio ("Pepín") Rivero, Director of the *Diario de la Marina*, and the "moral support" of León Ichaso and Rafael Suárez Solís.

When he at last returned to Cuba, in 1922 or 1923, Pepín Rivero had already done him the honor of assigning his "Glosas" (commentaries) to the first page of the "extra edition" of the *Diario de la Marina*, the evening edition of that newspaper, opposite his own "Impresiones." Mañach's first book was a collection of those ar-

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LUIS GUTIÉRREZ DELGADO, a Cuban journalist, magazine editor, and essayist, has also published two volumes of poetry. He is now living in Miami preparing a volume on Cuban history. He was a personal friend of Jorge Mañach.



ticles, which he entitled *Glosario*; it was published in 1924. The following year, as columnist of *El País*, he published his delightful *Estampas de San Cristóbal* (Sketches of San Cristóbal), a pleasing collection of chronicles of old Havana. The city's full name is San Cristóbal de La Habana, in honor of its patron saint.

Juan J. Remos, in his *Historia de la Literatura Cubana*, placed the rise of the *minorista* movement and the publication of *Revista de Avance* in 1927, while Dr. Herminio Portell Vilá asserts that it began publication in 1926 and ended in 1933, the year General Machado's government fell. Mañach took a very active part in this revolution and he is credited with having drafted the platform of the ABC Party, to which he belonged. The *Revista de Avance*, which had a great influence on the youth of that generation, was edited by Mañach, Juan Marinello, Félix Lizaso, Francisco Ichaso, and several others.

One aspect of Jorge Mañach that is very little known outside of Cuba is his artistic ability. He wanted to be an artist, and he painted strong realistic pictures, influenced by Velázquez, whose *Las Meninas* (Maids of Honor) he copied in a masterly fashion. His aspiration to teach history of art in the San Alejandro National School of Fine Arts dated from this era. But the professors of the generation of 1926 blocked the way. He never forgave them. The approval that Mañach later gave to the moderns who followed the French school—as opposed to the academicians—was rooted in this occurrence, and started a polemic that lasted twenty years. In the end, Mañach brought them together. This is the reason behind an exposition that he organized in the City Hall of Havana, in 1941, as an answer to another devoted exclusively to contemporary art. The Palace of the Captains General was resplendent. In the patio, the Municipal Band, directed by Maestro Gonzalo Roig and composed of members of the Havana Philharmonic Orchestra, opened with some Liszt preludes when Mañach arrived to give his lecture in the series on art organized by the municipality. Two thousand people waited in the Hall of Mirrors for the learned words of the lecturer. Dr. Mañach spoke for two hours, without notes. He spoke from the heart and, in analyzing the different schools, he gave each its due, uncompromisingly. The audience, deeply moved, rose to its feet in tribute to hear the last part of the lecture.

A restless spirit, Jorge Mañach also tried his hand successfully at playwriting. In 1928 he won an award for his three-act comedy entitled *Tiempo Muerto* (The Dead Past), but he was most outstanding in the fields of essay writing and lecturing.

Mañach, graduate of the universities of Harvard and Havana, abandoned his artistic ambitions when he became a professor of history of philosophy on the University of Havana Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, as the result of a competition in 1940. Previously, from 1935 to 1938, the period of his first exile, he had taught Spanish literature at the Columbia University Hispanic Institute, then directed by Federico de Onís.

His devotion to teaching inspired him to organize the University of the Air, which began to broadcast over Radio Salas in 1932 and was later continued on Station

CMQ. The most outstanding Cuban thought found expression over the University of the Air, and for a long time the lectures were published by Editorial Lex of Havana.

At his death Mañach was—and had been for many years—a member of the Cuban Academy of the Language (a corresponding academy of the Spanish Academy); of the National Academy of Arts and Letters; and of the Society of Friends of the Country; and he had been a member of the Hispano-Cuban Institute of Culture.

Remos, in his *Historia de la Literatura Cubana*, mentioned above, asserts that "Mañach, like other writers of his generation, has been influenced as much by the thought as by the prose of the Spanish philosopher and professor José Ortega y Gasset, whose insights, innovations, coinage of new words, and vision of human and cultural problems have deeply impressed our intellectuals, creating a school that more than a few have followed with success. . . ." I disagree with the historian, and Mañach himself is going to give us the reason further on.

In 1939, Mañach was elected Delegate from his province, Las Villas, to the Constituent Convention that drafted the Constitution of 1940. But that did not keep him from his work, for the same year he published a collection of his political newspaper columns under the title *Pasado Vigente* (The Living Past), in which he presents his thought on the situation in Cuba from 1930 to 1933, and its possible remedies.

In the general elections of 1940, held on July 14, Mañach was elected Senator from Oriente Province for a four-year term, as the candidate of the coalition formed by the Cuban Revolutionary, Republican Action, and ABC parties, the last being his own. He was not a politician in the usual sense. His was not a political career of personal advantage or political machines, but of public service on the altar of his country, in the manner of Martí. He failed as a politician, but his work in the Constituent Convention and the Senate of Cuba has left us a valuable heritage.

*Mañach's library, with one of the best private collections in Havana, was often used to receive the author's friends*



Jorge Mañach was a tireless worker; but he did things with such great ease that people did not realize when or how he labored. One of his friends, Dr. Antonio Barreras, began compiling a bibliography of his works and, by 1956, had annotated eight thousand titles, including essays, lectures, and articles. At that time, on the eve of his departure for Spain for his sabbatical year's leave from the University of Havana, Mañach wrote—perhaps he had a premonition—what might be called his cultural testament, for the trip once again interrupted his series of articles on Cuban letters.

Here I have abstracted his evaluation of the cultural panorama in Cuba:

*The Novel:* "Almost stagnant after Loveira and Luis Felipe Rodríguez, brought to life by Enrique Labrador Ruiz and Alejo Carpentier, although the latter was a contributor from afar."

*Poetry:* "The post-modernist poetic impulse that Brull, Ballagas, and Florit initiated is sustained, to bifurcate later, with Guillén on the one hand and Lezama Lima and his school on the other."

(Mañach differed with the school of Lezama Lima without, however, denying his poetic talent or that of his associates or followers, men like Baquero, Gaztelu, Cintio Vitier. Mañach's disagreement was a question of taste in poetic expression, because, as he said, "I have a passion for clarity, and poetry full of obscure meanings tires me a little, as I find with Góngora, Valéry, or Eliot.")

*The Short Story:* "The short story is doing well," he said. "There have been many excellent young short-story writers since Carlos Montenegro and Lino Novás Calvo—two true masters. We can show this every year in the Hernández Catá literary contest."

*Essay and Criticism:* "Many of the best talents of the generation of *Revista de Avance* have not been able to demonstrate their full worth in the fields of essay and criticism because of political or journalistic restrictions; for example, Marinello and Ichaso, both magnificent writers. Other younger writers—Lazo, Roa, José Antonio Portuondo—have found salvation through the universities. The following show great promise: Sánchez Aballi,

Parajón, and some in the *origenista* movement, which has recently come to the fore.

*The Theater:* "There continues to be theater and a public for it. I believe that we owe this in good part to Rafael Suárez Solís, who has shown so much talent in this medium also, and to such sponsors as Luis A. Baralt, and to societies like the *Patronato*."

*The Writers:* "I regard as justified Ferrara's opinion that the Cuban prose writers of today, in general, have more substance than those of his time, when, as he said, one had to read several pages in order to extract one idea."

*Institutions:* Mañach attributed a preponderant cultural role to institutions, for example, the Hispano-Cuban Cultural Institute; the Lyceum; the academies; the *Ateneo*, presided over by Chacón y Calvo; and more recently the National Institute of Culture, under the direction of Dr. Guillermo de Zéndegui; the National Museum, headed by Dr. Montoro; and the Cuban Society of Philosophy, presided over by Dr. Humberto Piñera.

*Foreign Influences:* Mañach said: "I believe that [in literature] the Spanish and Hispano-American influence in force some twenty years ago (the generation of 1898, José Enrique Rodó, and others), with the exception of the continuing influence of Ortega y Gasset, has been displaced by a *foreign* current, a kind of 'discovery of the Mediterranean': Dostoevski, the U. S. novelists, Rilke and Eliot, Valéry and Gide, Aldous Huxley, Kafka, and so on. A similar phenomenon has occurred in painting and music."

*Philosophy:* "Crosscurrents: on one hand, Jacques Maritain and Neo-Thomism; on the other, existentialists, believers or nonbelievers. And, of course, a little of all the rest: U.S. pragmatism, neorealism, the vitalism of Ortega y Gasset—but those are not currents, but rather more like splatterings. Whatever it has of existence will endure; but in my opinion, what there is of almost a religious faith in the *ism*, which is a reflection of our time, will pass away."

*Contributions of Hispanic America:* "Four centuries after the barbarian invasion, that place that was later to be called Italy had given nothing at all to the world. . . . It took it a long time to produce a Dante, a Thomas Aquinas, a Galileo. Of course, Hispanic America was not born under the sign of barbarity; for this very reason it has already given the world a Bello, a Bolívar, a Sarmiento, a Martí, a Rubén Darío, and many lesser people who, if they had been born in Europe, would have been applauded even by Papini, that great detractor who was so fond of belittling reputations."

This, in short, is the cultural testament that Jorge Mañach left Cuba, before he went into voluntary exile in 1956, an exile that he disguised as a vacation or a sabbatical year.

There remains much, however, to say about him and his work. For example, pressed to choose a single most important book, Mañach said, "*Timeo hominem unius libri*. However, I believe that I would choose *Don Quixote*. But if I had to choose a few more—the Bible, Plato, Renán, Martí, Thomas Hardy—How can I tell!" ☺

Mañach, by  
Eduardo Pérez





## arden of Art

**LUIS ZALAMEA**

ANY TOURIST OR VISITOR strolling through the downtown streets of Mexico City on a Sunday afternoon will feel irresistibly drawn by the colorful array of easels that brightens the lawns in Sullivan Park, near the Monument to Motherhood. If the visitor allows his curiosity to get the better of him, as happened to me recently, he will turn into the winding garden paths between the rows of royal palms to find himself among a galaxy of government and political personalities, movie stars and producers, businessmen, intellectuals and artists, not to mention many foreign tourists, who join the general public in admiring, studying, and buying every type and style of pictures, engravings, and sculptures. This is the

"Garden of Art," the only place I have seen in my many travels that operates permanently and simultaneously as an open-air exhibit, workshop, and market.

Undoubtedly my readers will be quick to point to the open-air exhibits in Greenwich Village in New York, the Latin Quarter in Paris, or Palermo Woods in Buenos Aires. But these are sporadic events or, at best, annual competitions, while the Garden of Art has been open in the Mexican capital every Sunday without fail since

*LUIS ZALAMEA, a Colombian who completed university studies in the United States, has been a public information officer of the United Nations since 1948 and is now editor of the Revista de las Naciones Unidas in Mexico City.*





*Woman has caricature and portrait drawn as passers-by look on*



*Mexican painter Marino Vergara finishes an oil painting while waiting for prospective purchasers*

January 23, 1955, when it was inaugurated by the first eight exhibitors. Neither inclement weather nor political demonstrations nor parades nor even the terrible earthquake that wreaked havoc throughout the city in the early hours of a July Sunday in 1957 have succeeded in spoiling this perfect record.

As a painting enthusiast with a modest collection, I soon became a regular visitor to this combination social gathering and exhibit *sui generis*, making friends with some of the participants and endeavoring to "discover," at reasonable prices, of course, the great painters of tomorrow, possible heirs of the Mexican tradition forged by Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, and Tamayo.

Gradually, after several Sunday visits, I became more at home in the Garden of Art and I wanted to know more about the details of its origin and its organization. Some painter friends of mine introduced me to Jorge Contreras, whose personal initiative was responsible for the creation of this unique institution. Contreras, who was born in Mexico City about thirty-five years ago, is an architect and painter, and head of plastic arts at the National Mexican Youth Institute, an official agency of the Mexican Government. It was his idea, originally, to "move the work of the young artists out of the gallery and into the garden," as he himself puts it, and he has presided over this highly interesting process from the beginning.

Contreras has a pleasant, open manner. One Sunday, under the blazing noon sun, which takes on a tropical fierceness during the month of April on the Anahuac plateau, he cheerfully accompanied me to inspect the colorful exhibit. It contains a little of everything: self-taught and formally trained primitives; realist, academic, impressionist, and surrealist painters; and many abstractionists, with not a few exponents of the "Mexican school of realism." One exhibitor alone displays in five or six canvases what might be termed, for all practical purposes, "a complete folio of painting in every century and style." There are "sketchers," too, and the inevitable "anecdotal" painters, the caricaturists, and the ten-minute portrait artists.

"As you can see," Contreras commented, "all the movements, schools, trends, and ideologies are represented here without discrimination. The public is the real judge and its tastes are respected. It's not like the galleries, where the critics are concerned with promoting one school or another. Here the buyers may purchase from a very extensive selection what they like best, what moves them most deeply."

"Although I don't suppose you keep statistics on this sort of thing, does the public show any marked preference?"

"The truth is that the public accepts and appreciates realism more than abstract art."

Contreras told me about the extraordinary progress



*People from all walks of life visit Sullivan Park on Sunday*

made by the Garden of Art in only six years of existence. Thanks to the support of successive directors of the National Mexican Youth Institute, especially the current director, Mr. Agustín Arriaga Rivera, the number of participants has grown from the original eight exhibitors to 168. The Institute, located only a few steps from Sullivan Park, provides the participants with storage space for their works, lecture and meeting rooms, and exhibit halls where samples from the work of the most outstanding artists are displayed periodically. In addition, there is a selection committee composed of three painters from the Garden and Contreras himself, which is permanently responsible for supervising the quality and excellence of the work; it also approves applications from new par-

ticipants, based solely on their work. Those who, in the opinion of the committee, are not yet ready to exhibit may utilize the instructors and workshops of the Institute for further training.

"The Garden," its founder added proudly, "is an authentically international undertaking, for artists from almost every country have exhibited here at one time or another. Currently there are twenty-two artists from Europe and other American countries here by special invitation of our Coordinating Committee. Thanks to this permanent exchange program, we in Mexico are fully aware of what is happening in the field of painting in other countries, and foreign artists, in turn, visit the studios of their Mexican colleagues to exchange views, experiences, and techniques. This is our way of contributing a tiny grain of sand to the development of new values, not only in Mexico, but in other parts of the world as well. Painters from such nearby cities as Puebla, Toluca, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and a few others also join us here every week." I noted that several of them wear the typical costume of their particular region.

Continuing our stroll, we next witnessed the sale of a picture. The negotiations were carried out by the painter, a Colombian; the prospective purchaser, an American tourist; and a friend of the painter, who lent his good offices as interpreter. Naturally there was a good deal of bargaining: offers and counteroffers and a burst of interpretation. At last they agreed on a price. I asked



*Twenty-two foreign painters now exhibit each week. Colombian painter Fernando Oramas, with some of his works*

my companion to tell me something about the economic organization of the undertaking.

This aspect is highly important, for the Sunday sales are, for many exhibitors, their only income. The receipts are not inconsiderable, I noted, as Contreras quoted a few figures. There are prices in the Garden to suit every purse, ranging from about eight to twelve dollars for a drawing or engraving to several hundred dollars for the paintings or sculptures of the best-known artists. Total sales since the establishment of the Garden exceed \$160,000. The individual sales of some painters amount to four or five thousand dollars a year, over and above their sales outside the Garden. Five per cent of each sale goes into a reserve fund, and the Institute matches these

contributions with an equal amount. This fund is used to buy easels, finance publicity campaigns, and organize special contests among the members, with cash or travel prizes. Recently, one of these competitions, entitled "Mexico City Through the Years," won special acclaim; original paintings showing the colonial sites, streets, and avenues of the city were exhibited prior to the initiation of a reurbanization program.

Believing that such an undertaking must require a great deal of organization, I asked Contreras a number of other questions on the subject. He assured me that the Garden has not become "bureaucratized." There is a monthly general assembly of all participants, a coordinating and projects committee headed by Contreras himself and composed of three member participants, and the selection committee already mentioned.

Disciplinary measures are also applied. Any participant who fails to exhibit for a period of four Sundays without justified cause is suspended. This opens the field to new exhibitors, for there are many applicants eagerly awaiting admission. But in spite of all the assemblies and committees, it is my personal impression that Jorge Contreras is not only the founder of this movement, but its sustaining force and guide as well.

The heat of the sun forced us to seek a brief respite in the small cafe frequented by the members and clients of the Garden of Art, where we enjoyed a cool drink. I asked Contreras about the artists who got their start in Sullivan Park and have today become famous. Among the Mexicans, he mentioned the engraver Arturo Bustos, who has won prizes in international competitions, and the painters Mario Orozco Rivera, Leonardo Badillo, Ernesto Alcántara, and Froilán Ojeda.

Jorge Contreras speaks of the Garden of Art with great emotion and with the conviction of one who has seen his efforts triumph, who has witnessed the fulfillment of an ideal. "The Garden," he told me forcefully, "fulfills a threefold function: it introduces new values, it plays an educational role—since the artists work in full view of the public—and it offers the participants the opportunities of a permanent market. Consequently, it has created a new public for art in Mexico, a public composed of the

*Lively discussion group forms near painting of Pancho Villa*



people themselves, not the high-income elite that usually visits galleries. Can you cite any other example of such authentic popularization of art? This is an eminently social function. The people in the capital have become accustomed to making the rounds of the Garden. Every Sunday all sectors of society, from cabinet ministers to laborers, meet here. The President of Mexico himself, Mr. Adolfo López Mateos, was a frequent visitor when he held the post of Secretary of Labor in the preceding administration. And we have many other famous clients. A few Sundays ago, President Sukarno of Indonesia visited the Garden and bought about fifteen works."

"Does the Garden serve as a center for the activities the participants carry on independently during the week?"

"Of course. Many people come here, in an official or private capacity, to commission our artists to do portraits, murals, and special works. Many doors are opened to the artists in this way, not only in Mexico, but also abroad. Contracts for many countries have come out of this Park, and I can recall in particular ones for Canada and Cuba. But the most important part of all this is that here, in the Garden of Art, many Mexicans who had never in their lives thought of buying a picture establish their first direct contact with painting. Now, the chromos and



*Young girl explains her preferences in art to a friend*

*Jorge Contreras (left), founder and guiding spirit of the Garden, talks with the author at the cafe the artists frequent*



*Carlos Marín, of Mexico, was one of the original exhibitors*

calendar art on the walls of our people's homes are gradually being replaced by original works of art. This has been made possible by their opportunity of seeing the plastic arts freely exhibited in our gardens, unrestricted by inhibitions or rules."

Contreras told me of the trips taken by members of the Garden, representing different schools and of varying artistic caliber, who visit the Mexican state capitals to set up exhibits in the parks along with the local artists. This is how the missionary work of artistic popularization is spread. Another city, Guadalajara, initiated its own regular weekly exhibit a few months ago. "Ideally," he said, "we should extend these trips abroad, but there are so many difficulties."

I said good-by to Jorge Contreras reluctantly; I felt at home in his surroundings, where he had put an ideal into practice. When I shook his hand at the end of our interview, I wondered whether five years ago he would not have considered his present achievement next to impossible. And, giving free rein to my imagination, I dreamed of a "Garden of Poetry" in the far-off future where, united in true artistic solidarity to carry our song to the people—who are, in the last instance, the determining factor in the immortality of creative work—we poets might some day fulfill our humanistic and social mission in the evolution of thought as precursors of philosophy and science. Enough of dreams! But, if undertakings such as the Garden of Art in Mexico have helped to dispel the stereotype of the misunderstood painter, dying of hunger and isolated from the social community, why couldn't the same thing be done for poets? ☞



# **THE OAS**

## **IN ACTION**

### **FOLLOWING THROUGH**

Carrying out its responsibilities in the Alliance for Progress, the OAS has sponsored planning sessions in three fields since the Punta del Este meeting:

A seven-man group, named by the OAS Secretary General, met at the Inter-American Housing and Planning Center in Bogotá, Colombia, in September to outline bases for drawing up long-range housing plans as an integral part of general economic and social development. They prepared a Research Guide to aid officials and institutes in the individual countries in formulating their housing programs.

A meeting of experts on agriculture in Latin America, held at the Pan American Union in October, was the first called by the newly formed Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development. The OAS organized this Committee in cooperation with the FAO and ECLA, of the United Nations, and the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, to aid governments in their agricultural planning and to coordinate technical assistance to the governments from the agencies represented on the Committee.

And in Buenos Aires, sixty tax experts from the member states and many observers met later in October to share ideas on the best way to strengthen the tax systems in Latin America. Jointly sponsored

by the OAS and ECLA, the conference also had the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Program in Taxation of the Harvard University School of Law.

**JORGE SOL CASTELLANOS**  
Assistant Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs

### **NEW STATISTICS TRAINING SET**

Next year a new inter-American training center will start providing urgently needed statisticians for educational institutions, statistics-compiling institutions, and institutions that compute derived statistics and analyze statistical data. Sponsored by the OAS and the Inter American Statistical Institute, the center will be part of a broad program aimed at increasing the number and improving the qualifications of statisticians.

Three separate courses will be offered at the Inter-American Statistical Training Center. Employees of national bureaus of statistics and other official statistics offices will study in Course A, while Course B is designed for the analysts and interpreters of statistics, principally employees of central banks, development corporations, and economic planning boards. There will be twenty-one scholarships for each of these ten-month courses (one for each OAS member state). For Course C, planned to give professors of statistics training equivalent to a U.S. master's degree in statistics, fifteen scholarships will be provided; the course will last for two ten-month periods.

The opening date will be announced and applications for scholarships will be solicited soon after a definite site for the Center is chosen.

**TULO H. MONTENEGRO**  
Director, Department of Statistics

## **1960 ANNUAL REPORT**

Principal activities of the OAS and its specialized agencies during the year 1960 are summarized in the recently published Annual Report of the Secretary General to the OAS Council.


The introduction to the 124-page book describes 1960 as a year of crisis for international organizations, which "must change their concepts of the magnitude as well as the pace of their efforts if they are to be equal to the needs of the times." However, the report regards international institutions as essential for "... marshalling the collective effort required to do away with poverty, sickness, illiteracy and the abuse of human rights—in short, making realities of today's great objectives, which only yesterday were vaguely felt aspirations." It concludes that the OAS, "through the wealth of resources provided in the Charter and the other basic documents," has the flexibility needed to meet the ever more pressing demands for action being made upon it.

In approving the Act of Bogotá, which was

drafted in the fall of 1960 by the Committee of Twenty-one, the OAS Council expressed the governments' determination to launch a massive, across-the-front attack on underdevelopment, with particular emphasis on the social aspects of development: land tenure, taxation, education, public health, and housing.

In the field of maintaining the peace and security of the Hemisphere, the report outlines the work of the Sixth and Seventh Foreign Ministers' Meetings, held in San José, Costa Rica, and of the Inter-American Peace Committee in the various instances in which it was called upon to act during the period. Also noted is the fact that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights began to function last year.

The report highlights the multi-faceted activities of the Pan American Union, from the technical work in the economic and social fields to the cultural contribution of the art, music, and letters programs.



# SPEAKING OF THE UNITED STATES

## A Survey of Recent Cultural Trends

JOSÉ FERRATER MORA

WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THE UNITED STATES more than ten years ago, several things amazed me. Having come from places where every single thing counts—or counted—I was amazed at the abundance of things. Here there were—and still are—many things. But, while I was amazed at the abundance of many of the things, I was surprised, and completely perplexed, by the dearth of others. Among these, the one that impressed me most was the great scarcity of bookshops.

Living as I was in a city (New York) of more than seven million people, and in an urban area where almost twenty million people are squeezed together, I hoped to find, if not a bookshop on every corner, as in Paris, at least a considerable number of large bookshops handling the merchandise I am going to talk about. My hopes were soon dashed. Of course, there were some bookshops in New York. Some of them (I do not want to mention any names for fear of being accused of subtle advertising) were rather highly esteemed and were well known. But by no means could it be said that they were abundant. And, since I was accustomed to thinking that without bookshops there are no books, and without books there are no readers, the conclusion seemed obvious: in this country, books were not a much sought-after article. They are not, I thought, as important here as in Argentina, or, if you like, Buenos Aires; Chile, or, if you like, Santiago; Mexico, or, if you like, Mexico City.

Could it be that New York was a strange, but deplorable, exception? My visits to other American cities confirmed my first impression. And it was strengthened by contacts with intellectuals by inclination or profession, especially with university professors. The closely packed shelves of the private libraries usually owned

by persons of such professions or inclination in the Spanish-speaking countries (and, from what I have heard, the Portuguese-speaking countries) were rare here. Who is reading, or to be more specific, who is buying books, I wondered, in this country where so many other things are abundant?

I must confess that my perplexity was deepened by a fact that appears to contradict the above impressions: that is, that if not the public, at least the intellectuals, especially those who must handle many books, did not appear to be very much worried by the apparent absence of bookshops. Why should they be? It was obvious that they could have all the books they wanted. The monotonous complaint of most Latin American intellectuals: "We cannot do thorough work, because we do not have the books" was, and still is, nonexistent here, or extremely rare. I had the opportunity to prove they were right. Having come to the United States to prepare one of the issues of my *Diccionario de Filosofía*, I found for the first time, after many years of penury, that I could work on a project that requires a dizzy amount of vital library research, and have the material necessary to proper intellectual endeavor. For the first time I found myself submerged, nearly drowned, in books. My difficulty was not the shortage, but the plethora, of books. Just as some individuals cannot control their own souls, I could not manage the avalanche of books that came pouring down on me.

How can I explain this paradoxical situation? It is very simple. With the exception of a few privileged corners of the country, bookshops were not plentiful. However, public and university libraries were wide open and had resources so abundant they overwhelmed the reader, and with facilities for access unequalled in my experience. As the Spanish poet and critic Dámaso Alonso once wrote from the Harvard Widener Library: "Here I am surrounded by six million volumes. . . ." In a way, they were his. His to enjoy, at least; only his right of ownership could be disputed.

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JOSÉ FERRATER MORA is a professor of philosophy at Bryn Mawr College, where his office is located in the college library. He is the author of several books on philosophy, and has previously written for *AMÉRICAS* on the U.S. cultural scene.

As I began to know the United States better, I noted that the sources of books, apart from those mentioned above, were more extensive than one was led to believe by the relative absence of bookshops in the streets. For one thing, there are the well-stocked university bookshops, which are seen only when one has actually gone onto a campus. Then there are those mysterious agents, generally hidden away in inaccessible floors of buildings in New York or Boston, who provide those who have entered their cenacles—or to be more exact, those whose names are on their file cards—with any volumes one might want to buy in several languages. I soon enjoyed reading catalogues containing the latest British, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, and Dutch publications in the fields of theology, poetry, mathematics, or sociology. My problem was not where I could buy books, but how I was going to get the necessary funds to buy them. I jumped from thinking that there were no books in this country to thinking that there was nothing but books here. Should I, then, correct radically the first, rather gloomy impression I had of the relative absence of bookshops in New York?

Not entirely. The situation I have described so sketchily was, besides being paradoxical, complicated. In a country whose most burning question has been the increasing tendency for functions that were formerly considered a public responsibility to be taken over by private interests, books constituted a glaring exception. Libraries open to the public were, and continue to be,

abundant, while extensive private libraries appeared to have been discontinued, if, indeed, they ever were in existence. And so, something surprising and disturbing was happening in this country with respect to books. Bookshops were, I repeat, relatively scarce. Considering the population, few books were sold. The so-called best-sellers were, as they are everywhere, an illusion, for the fact that two million copies of a certain book are sold quickly does not mean that many books are sold, much less published. As few books were sold, the publication possibilities diminished. "In terms of number of titles published," Ernest Havemann recently wrote in a revealing, and at the same time encouraging, article published in *Life*, "the book business has been far smaller in the United States than in Britain and Russia and even smaller, allowing for the difference in population, than in countries like Cambodia and Thailand." The author could have added: Chile, Mexico, Venezuela, or Argentina. As a matter of fact, in Argentina there were at one time more than eight hundred publishing firms, most of them not very active, to be sure, but some of them going full steam.

The purpose of this article is to show an important "cultural trend" in the United States that has been gaining momentum in the last five years, and that, in recent months, appears to have become definitely established, that is, the constant increase in private book collections—through the increased production, distribution, and sale of books to the public—because a few American

*Much of the world's best literature is now available in paperback editions in the United States. Display at college bookstore*





publishers, quickly imitated by almost all the rest, made a great discovery: how to publish books at reasonable prices by substituting paper binding for the traditional cloth binding. These are the now famous "paperbacks" or "paperbounds."

At first, this appears to be a joke. Discovery, indeed! Isn't this just what the Spanish, French, and Italian publishers have been doing for decades, if not centuries? How can this represent a "cultural trend" in the United States? Would it not be better to recognize that American publishers have finally decided to imitate their fellow publishers in other countries—and more directly their British fellow publishers, whose paperbacks have withstood the test of time? Is what the above-mentioned publishers are doing not the same as what certain English-language publishers have already done, with the famous Tauchnitz series, for example, with unquestionable success? And if that is not significant, was it not in the United States itself that there appeared some years ago the much-discussed pocket books, which not a few publishers of other countries struggled to imitate, and in part to belittle?

To these questions, I shall give several quick answers. First of all, what matters in the American paperbacks now being published is not so much the mere fact that they are paperbound (or rather that they are *not* bound in cloth), but the *type* of book, which is indicated by their presentation, color, size, and in general, what could be called their over-all "air"; in short, the material "personality" of the volume. Secondly, the intellectual scope, not to mention the variety, is infinitely greater than that of the pocket books. Thirdly, the price—more than for pocket books, but less than for clothbound books—is an interesting compromise between the decidedly popular and the excessively exclusive. Fourthly and finally, the means of distribution differ from those adopted in other countries, although increasingly copied by some of them.

On this last point, I'd like to give some examples. Approximately ten years ago, I passed through a large railroad station (since this is an example, it can easily be generalized to include airport waiting rooms, newsstands at subway entrances, and so on). On some of the revolving bookracks there were dozens of pocket books of the type described above. Some were in the persistent "How to do" this or that series (*Eat and Reduce*; *Earn Money While Doing Nothing*; *Learn While Asleep*); others bore sensational titles on their covers, such as *Suburban Wife*, with just as sensational subtitles ("Many free hours and many men available"), and rather provocative pictures; others were miraculously abridged dictionaries or mercilessly mutilated classics. A few months ago, I went to the same corner. The bookracks had increased; their wares had been expanded. The books like *Suburban Wife* were still there, although they looked a little tired. But surrounding them everywhere was a multitude of authors and titles: *Buddenbrooks*, by Thomas Mann; Shakespeare's *Sonnets*; *Burmese Days*, by George Orwell; *Wild Ass's Skin*, by Balzac; *The Possessed*, by Dostoevski; *Portrait*

*of a Lady*, by Henry James; *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, by Rabelais; *Painting and Reality*, by Etienne Gilson; *Decipherment of Linear B*, by John Chadwick; *Chronicles*, by Bernal Díaz del Castillo; *Aquinas*, by F. C. Copleston; and even—believe it or not—*History and Root of the Principle of the Conservation of Energy*, by Ernst Mach. Naturally, I have given only a sample. Another example: in a drug store in a small town near Philadelphia, I saw on display recently, among other works, the following: *Don Juan*, by Lord Byron; *The Red and the Black*, by Stendhal; *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, by Marx and Engels; Virgil's *Aeneid*; *The Life of Jesus*, by E. Renan; *Three Exemplary Novels and Tragic Sense of Life*, by Miguel de Unamuno; *Spartacus*, by Howard Fast; *The Modern Theme*, by José Ortega y Gasset; *Paradise Lost*, by Milton; *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis; *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, by Jean-Paul Sartre—all these, of course, oddly intermingled with the memoirs of Jack Paar and Marilyn Monroe, with books on how to care for babies during the first sixteen days, on the development of sex, 645 ways of checkmating in three moves, and on advice to girls when they reach puberty.

There are three things, in this connection, that I consider worth mentioning. First, the introduction of a kind of book format that can revolutionize not only the publishing business, but also the reading habits of the public. I have already said that the important thing about the paperbacks is not the material fact that the cover is paper, but a certain "personality" the book has. These paperbacks are not the kind of book one buys hastily while waiting for a train, with the firm intention of throwing it away as soon as possible. They are the kind of book that one wants to read and keep. The format varies greatly, but it is not at all undefined. It has, furthermore, a stamp of its own; a characteristic size, with variations for works that, because of their length, require more pages; covers that are at the same time serious and attractive; relatively durable paper. The paperbacks differ in this respect from the pocket books, which are cheaper and less durable; however, it is curious to note that in many cases the style of the latter is tending to imitate that of the former. The undignified appearance of the pocket book of the early days of publishing this type of book is giving way to a certain dignity of form. The paperbacks have, therefore, a "face," and, as I said before, an "air." Also, a certain price, although this varies, from the cheapest, which sell for fifty, seventy-five and ninety-five cents, to the most expensive, selling for \$2.50 and even \$3.75 (dangerously high). With the most common prices being \$1.25 and \$1.75, they are within the purchasing power of the vast majority of the public. In this respect, they cannot be compared with many other paperbound books that have been produced in other countries, the relative price of which (considering the corresponding standard of living), is, or has been, in many cases, similar to that of clothbound books in this country. They can be compared, however, with other books also being

produced in other countries, whose presentation, function, and effectiveness are similar to those of the paperbacks.

Secondly, these books are distributed by various means. The relative paucity of bookshops in the cities and towns of the United States, to which I referred at the beginning, may have more complex roots than it appears to have. The way, or ways, of life must bear some relationship to this fact. As long as such a way of life continues, it is not likely that this situation will change fundamentally. It is almost certain that there will never be so many bookshops in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, as in Paris, Freiburg, or Buenos Aires. However, books are beginning to be distributed in places that Europeans and Latin Americans may consider a bit strange, but that are more or less usual here: in drug stores, stations, and supermarkets. You may, if you like, consider this unfortunate. But what matters, in the end, is not so much the specific manner in which the books are made available to the public, but the fact that they are made available.

Finally, the variety of titles published. In an article such as this one, it would be folly to try to give even an approximate idea of that variety. Suffice it to say that the paperback catalogue, which was laughable no more than four years ago, is impressive today. Practically all American publishers, including both commercial and university publishers, have their rapidly growing collections of paperbacks. They are available

in every field: literature, philosophy, religion, natural sciences, the humanities, art, and technology. Many are reprints of works that have proved their worth in previous editions at a higher price. But the tendency to publish works first as paperbacks is increasing. In any case, the general public can easily build up a respectable library with these books. Greek historians, medieval theologians, Elizabethan writers, idealist philosophers, contemporary scientists, can all be represented in such libraries. Opening a catalogue at random, one finds in the section on philosophy alone the names Aristotle, Berkeley, Descartes, Russell, Windelband, Hegel, Gabriel Marcel, and many others. For the specialist, it is unsatisfactory. But for the specialist, everything is unsatisfactory, because he must have some reason for being a specialist. For the public in general, however, it is a challenge. And in this country, at least, it is a very interesting innovation.

That the gradual, even accelerated, publication and dissemination of books is not sufficient basis for maintaining, and none at all for shaping, a culture, I believe no one would dispute. The mere existence of books, no matter the quantity or even the quality, is not a panacea even for the problems of a culture. But that such publication and dissemination constitutes a favorable "cultural trend" pregnant with possibilities appears to me to be beyond question. And that is all I wanted, this time, to show the readers, if there should be any, of this article. ☞

*Paperbacks are sold all over the United States in many places other than bookstores. Here browser selects a volume in a drugstore*



# Road to Democracy

ROBERT J. ALEXANDER

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA, by Charles O. Porter and Robert J. Alexander. New York, Macmillan, 1961. 215 p. \$4.50.

IN WRITING THIS BOOK, Congressman Porter and I have wanted to present to the U.S. reading public what we consider to be one of the great problems of the Hemisphere. We have been deeply convinced of the importance of the struggle for democratic life and government in Latin America and have been disturbed by the lack of information, as well as the great amount of misinformation on the subject, that is prevalent in the United States.

Of course, we have started with certain preconceptions concerning the subject that we are discussing. We both passionately believe in democracy. We feel that the kind of society worth fighting for is one in which government is conducted with the positive consent of the governed, that is, by people freely elected for that purpose; and one in which the rights of the individual to speak, assemble, organize, petition, and believe what he wishes are protected.

Furthermore, we are convinced that this kind of a political system and society is not something that is adapted only to peoples of an Anglo-Saxon tradition, but rather is a goal to be achieved sooner or later by all nations. Most particularly, we are convinced that the people of Latin America are "ready" for democracy. Thus, we differ fundamentally in our approach from many U.S. observers of the Latin American scene, who are either cynical or deprecatory about the struggle for democracy in these countries. We also are in basic disconformity with those Latin American writers who have attempted from time to time to develop a philosophical apologia for one or another of the dictators of the region.

Finally, we both feel that the problem of political democracy is closely associated with social and economic issues. In the specific case of Latin America, we feel that the future of democracy in the area will not be

secure until the long-overdue social changes needed in these countries have been achieved.

## Our Interest in the Problem

Both of the authors have been personally concerned for a number of years with the problems that we are discussing. Congressman Porter first became interested in the question of the disappearance in the Dominican Republic late in 1956 of one of his constituents, Gerald Murphy. This young man was the aviator who flew Dr. Jesús de Galíndez to his death in the Dominican Republic a few months earlier. As a result of his investigations of this problem, Mr. Porter became deeply concerned with the whole question of the struggle for democracy in the Hemisphere. In Congress, he became one of the strongest supporters of the Latin American democratic cause, and one of the most urgent voices calling for a change in the United States attitude toward the rest of the Hemisphere.

I have also been interested in this problem for many years. I was a founder of the Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom, in Havana in 1950, and have been a member of its U.S. Committee ever since. We have dedicated this volume to Miss Frances Grant, General Secretary of the Inter-American Association, and a veteran of the Latin American democratic struggle of some thirty years' standing.

We believe that the problem of political democracy is a complex one. It has broad economic and social implications. For this reason, we have devoted considerable attention at the beginning of our volume to the analysis of social and economic conditions that have influenced the struggle. We have noted the vast differences separating social classes in the area, and the vast discrepancies in wealth and income that have gone along with these class distinctions. We have traced the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the area, first in developing modern mining and agricultural enterprises for the production of goods for export to the earlier industrial nations; then in terms of the growth of modern manufacturing in the Latin American countries themselves.

For the benefit of the U.S. reader we have also sought to point out certain differences in the political history of Latin America and the United States that provide some of the background for the more recent phases of the democratic struggle in Latin America. We have noted



ROBERT J. ALEXANDER, professor of economics at Rutgers University, has recently published *Communism in Latin America and The Bolivian National Revolution*. He has written extensively on the labor movement in Latin America, and served on the OAS committee of experts that prepared the report on public opinion and development for the Punta del Este conference.



that in the colonial period the Spanish and Portuguese parts of America had little experience with self-government of the kind that the English colonies were fortunate enough to enjoy. We also note that the achievement of political independence had little effect in changing the underlying economic and social structure of the area, being reduced in most countries largely to a shift in political power from the Spaniards and Portuguese born in Europe to the Spaniards and Portuguese born in America.

On the other hand, we have pointed out that democratic aspirations have constituted a part of the political life from the very beginning of the independent existence of the Latin American nations. We have pointed out the fact that, with only a few notable exceptions, virtually all of the constitutions written in the last century and a half in this part of the world have been democratic in form. However prevalent dictatorship may have been in fact, these documents have demonstrated that democratic ideals persisted, and that even the worst of the dictators had to pay at least lip service to these ideals.

Finally, in sketching in the background of the struggle for democracy we have argued that the economic and social changes of the last two or three generations have made these traditional aspirations for democracy more possible of achievement. These changes have brought into existence middle classes and groups that have fought for a diffusion of political power and for more political freedom. Thus in recent decades the democratic struggle has become more acute.

#### Factors Working for Democracy

In the next section of our book, Congressman Porter and I survey some of the factors in present-day Latin America that are working for a more effective democracy, and some of those that are acting as blocks to this development. In the first category, we discuss various class and social groups that generally seek a more democratic form of government. These include the middle-class elements associated with the rise of industry, whose interests are diametrically opposed to those of

the old landholding oligarchy that has traditionally had a monopoly not only of wealth and social prestige but of political power as well.

We have pointed to the trade union movement as one of the most important of these new social groups. Representing a new class, the urban wage and salary earner, the trade unions generally have found that they need a democratic atmosphere in which to operate effectively. Furthermore, they have been of key importance because they represent a force that can challenge the traditional role of the military as ultimate arbiters of politics in the area. Through the general strike, they have the power of bringing economic activities to a halt, thus blocking the efforts of the military to impose a dictatorship or to overthrow a popularly elected regime. Though the trade unions have occasionally come under totalitarian influence, they have generally been a powerful force for democracy.

We have also discussed the role of the intellectuals in the democratic struggle. We note that they have given leadership to most modern political parties in the area and in general have been an important element in the fight for democracy, in spite of the fact that some have been attracted by one or another brand of totalitarianism.

We have also discussed at considerable length the significance of well-organized political parties as a factor favoring political democracy. We have noted that these parties are different from those of the past in Latin America, in that they are organizations with programs and ideologies and with an active daily life, in contrast to older organizations, which were merely designed to bring to power one or another *caudillo* and tended to disappear after this had been achieved.

There is, as we note, a wide spectrum of parties in Latin America today. Some of these are conservative, defending the *status quo*, but most of them advocate one or another kind of extensive change in their countries' economic, social, and political life. We discuss briefly several kinds of democratic parties, including the Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, Socialists, national revolutionary parties (such as the Apristas of Peru, Acción

Elected after Peron's overthrow, Argentine President Arturo Frondizi receives symbolic cane from Provisional President Pedro Aramburu



Democrática of Venezuela, and Liberación Nacional of Costa Rica), and the Christian Democrats.

Finally, we discuss the importance, to the struggle for democracy in Latin America, of the shift in the position of the Catholic Church in recent years. We note that important segments of the Church have moved from the traditional position of conservatism, to a more liberal and democratic posture. This change is observable on a number of levels. On the one hand, it has found expression in the development since World War II of Christian Democratic parties in a dozen different countries. It has been noticeable also in the growth of Church-oriented labor and peasant movements in a number of countries. Finally, it has been discernible in the attitude that the national Church hierarchies have adopted in supporting the fight against the dictatorships of a number of countries, notably Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba.

#### Factors Working Against Democracy

Both some kinds of social and political conditions and certain specific groups are working against democracy in Latin America. In the former category, we note the still-widespread illiteracy of the region, though we argue that illiteracy is probably not the great handicap to political democracy that it was once regarded as by many observers, in view of the successful experiments with voting systems for illiterates that have been tried in Latin America and elsewhere.

We also feel that an important drawback to democracy in the area is the fact that in some cases even those who profess belief in democracy have not as yet been convinced that it is possible to lose an election honestly. The ability to lose loyally is certainly a fundamental of democratic government. We feel that much progress has been made in that direction in recent years. It is no longer a novelty to see a defeated party peacefully turn over the government to its victorious rivals.

We likewise note the importance of anti-democratic tradition as a force for perpetuating dictatorial government in the area. We underscore the importance of strengthening democratic elements in Latin American political traditions.

There are various important groups in Latin America that are a hindrance to the triumph of democracy. One of the most important of these is the military. In many of the countries, the armed forces have constituted a kind of Praetorian Guard since the early days of independ-

ence, assuming the right to make and unmake governments whenever they felt like doing so. We trace the various reasons that have brought about this situation, and try to assess the present situation of the military in contemporary Latin American politics. We note the tendencies that are working toward the professionalization of the armed forces and toward the reduction of their political influence. However, we conclude that the military remains one of the principal drawbacks to the development of democracy in the area.

The still-powerful remnants of the traditional ruling classes constitute another hindrance to democracy. They look upon dictatorship as an essential means to preserve intact their age-old privileges, and fear the growing influence in political life of the middle and lower groups in Latin American society.

Finally, the totalitarian political parties are a powerful influence working against political democracy. Latin America has known several types of such parties. There have been fascist parties in Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and several other nations of the area. There are Communist parties in all of the Latin American countries. In addition, there have been several indigenous totalitarian parties. We have noted that these totalitarian parties, and especially the indigenous ones, are of particular importance. They are popular groups that advocate changes in the economic and social structure of the Latin American countries, which are long overdue, but at the same time reject the postulates of democracy, holding that the needed social and economic changes cannot be obtained through democratic means.

#### The Struggle in Recent Decades

The middle portion of our book consists of a discussion of the struggle for democracy in a number of specific Latin American countries during recent decades. We begin with a chapter on the ebbs and flows of the tide of democracy between the two World Wars. We devote four chapters to tracing the story of recent triumphs of the fight against dictatorship in these nations.

In each case, we trace the evolution of the dictatorship in question and of the movement to overthrow it. We note that the actual ousting of the tyrant was only the first step in the evolution of a strong democratic system, and point out that the future of democracy in all of these countries is still in the balance, and depends largely on the achievement of social and economic changes that will bring about a firm foundation for democracy. Especially in the case of Cuba we raise serious questions concerning the trend that events have taken since the overthrow of the Batista regime on the first day of 1959.

We devote two further chapters to a discussion of the four remaining traditional-type dictatorships in the New World. As in the previous chapters, we sketch the long-continuing struggle against the dictatorships in question.

Our final chapter consists of a discussion of the role of the United States in the struggle for democracy in Latin America. We are strongly critical of what we interpret to be the lack of policy on this question by the



*People must sometimes demonstrate and fight for democracy. 1958 street battle in Caracas, Venezuela*

United States in the decade and a half following World War II. We argue that as a result of this lack of policy, powerful United States pressure groups with an interest in the situation in a particular Latin American country have been able to get their way in determining the United States' actions. In most cases, we argue, this situation has resulted in the United States giving its support to dictatorial regimes.

We also argue that the United States has had an inadequate program of aid to the economic development of the Latin American countries. This fact, together with widespread U.S. backing of dictatorships, has led to a disastrous deterioration in relations between the United States and the other nations of the Hemisphere.

We advocate a program for inter-American relations that we hope will improve the troubled state of affairs between the two parts of the Hemisphere. We first recommend the prime necessity for the top policy makers of the United States to take most seriously the situation in Latin America, and to devote more attention to this problem than has been the case in recent years. Second, we urge the need for the United States to make unequivocally clear its support of democracy against dictatorship in the Latin American region, and to throw its support behind democratic social change in the area.

Finally, we suggest the need for a very much expanded program of aid to the economic development of the area.

In words obviously written before the beginning of the Kennedy Administration, we sum up our conclusions in the following terms:

It is clear that the relations of the United States with Latin America had reached a state of crisis by 1959, because of an over-all lack of United States policy in the Hemisphere. For the first time, there was a real danger of an important neutralist bloc developing among the Latin American countries and Cuba was already lined up with the Soviet Union in the United Nations and elsewhere. The resentment against United States friendship for dictators and the frustrations arising from inadequate help to the Latin American development effort had generated a degree of hostility toward the United States which had not been equaled since the worst days of Big Stick diplomacy.

Therefore, the need for recasting the whole policy of the United States toward the Latin American countries is urgent. This revision of policy should be in terms such as will inspire confidence and enthusiasm, and will assure the Latin Americans that this country realizes that it has made some serious mistakes and is going to try to provide the kind of democratic leadership which the rest of the Hemisphere expects of us. If there is not such an alteration in the Latin American policy of the United States, we can expect to see the deterioration of this country's relations with the rest of the Hemisphere continue until Latin America becomes a first-class trouble area for the United States. This is the eleventh hour. We have some time left, and it behooves this country not to waste it. ☛

## Father of the Chilean Novel

MANUEL ROJAS

BLEST GANA, SUS MEJORES PÁGINAS. Prologue and selection by Manuel Rojas. Santiago, Empresa Editora Ercilla, S.A., 1960. 347 p.

THIS BOOK was written at the request of the Empresa Editora Ercilla and is addressed to students of secondary education and to all those who have a general interest in the "Father of the Chilean novel," perhaps the best of the Hispano-American novelists who have written historical novels.

There are various books about Alberto Blest Gana, and numerous studies have been made of his works, but there wasn't any one book that could, or tried to, sum them all up. In Chile he is more widely studied every day, even though there is almost no biographical material on him—his biographers have respected his private life or have not ventured into it—which is undoubtedly an advantage. On the other hand, the sheer volume of his works annuls this and any other advantage there might be.

Speaking of advantage or disadvantage, it would be worthwhile to point out that, just as the biographers have not intruded into his private and intimate life, so also none of those who have studied his works and written about him has paused to examine the private and intimate life of his prose. Alberto Blest Gana is spoken of as a discreet son might speak of his father, magnifying and praising his virtues, and minimizing or hiding his defects. Why mention his lack of interest in what is called good

writing? Why reproduce or bring to light his redundancies, his commonplace topics, or his occasional poverty of expression?

Some persons say, "That was how they wrote then." But, if we remember that when this novelist wrote his first work of real merit, *La Aritmética en el Amor* (Arithmetic in Love), in 1860, only three years had elapsed since the appearance of *Madame Bovary* in France, we have to ask: "Where did they write this way?" The answer is that it was in Chile. Which brings us to the conclusion that in certain human endeavors, material as well as intellectual, each country must go through its own long and sometimes painful evolution. The jury that awarded the prize to *La Aritmética en el Amor* said, however, "We would have wished to find in the language of this book that elegant correctness, that peculiar grace of good



MANUEL ROJAS, born in Argentina of Chilean parents, has lived in Chile for the last fifty years. As he put it, he has enjoyed life in various roles: "as a laborer, a journalist, a public employee, and an author." His main works, in addition to poetry and short stories, are four novels: *Lanchas en la Bahía* (Launches in the Bay); *Hijo de Ladrón* (Born Guilty), which has been translated into several languages, including English, Italian, and Swedish; *Mejor que el Vino* (Better than Wine), the second part of the latter work; and *Punta de Rieles* (End of the Track), published last year (see June 1961 AMÉRICAS).



scholars of Spanish." But Blest Gana was Chilean.

"The statement that he is the founder and father of the Chilean novel is not open to debate; it is a historical fact. Considering him as such, it is necessary to judge him as such. No founder establishes something perfect that is not subject to being improved. Should we condemn Pedro de Valdivia because he did not hand over to us a fully built Santiago? It would be ridiculous. The founder who establishes something does it with what he has and as best he may. Others will follow, and it will be improved if it is worth it. The case of Blest Gana is not unique in Hispanic America. Those who wrote novels in his time wrote exactly as he did; all were under the same influences and all suffered from the same lack of preparation and background. Romanticism, realism, and genre writing were the three roads to follow, from the Rio Grande to the very small Mapocho River. They saw no others, and not all were capable of discovering their own." These are the words with which I close the first part of the book, "Biography and Analysis."

#### Defects Are Outweighed

So it was necessary to preserve that tradition of respect, and it was preserved. We would have gained nothing by bringing out Blest Gana's faults anyway. They are sufficiently known and, in any case, it is the professors, not the critics, who should study him and examine him more rigorously. If they have not done so it is because now, at this distance, it is not necessary; to do so is almost absurd. And it is almost absurd because we Chilean writers, as well as the professors and the students of the literature of our country, understand that in this man, our father, there are values that outweigh all his defects. Those who read and study *Durante la Reconquista* (During the Reconquest), and understand the world that seethes there, realize what it meant to put together and write this two-volume work, with 1,115 pages, that was begun thirty years before its completion. For when Alberto Blest Gana was named chargé d'affaires in Washington in 1866, he had already begun writing this book that was not finished until 1896. He suspected that his life, from that day in 1866, would no longer belong to him as fully as it had before, and that he would have to sacrifice his literary ambitions in favor of an administrative career that might be long or short, uncertain or secure, but in which he, having accepted it, would have to serve with great dedication. These were other times, and perhaps Alberto Blest Gana was not one of those individuals who are impelled to do that for which they are talented and reject any other activity, however promising or advantageous it may seem. "So he kept the pages that he had written in a package sealed with wax in order to avoid temptations . . . His purpose in keeping those manuscripts thus was to abstain from all literary work so he could dedicate all his efforts to administrative tasks. . . . Only in 1888, upon retiring, did he renew his literary work, beginning by destroying what had been written of *Durante la Reconquista*, which he found to be very inferior to what, in his judgment, this work should be, and turned back to begin with the first page." (From

an autobiography by Alberto Blest Gana, written in the third person.)

For those of us who are acquainted with Chile, who know that the writer there has not had even a minimum of social and economic backing, either in the past century or in this one, and who know the names of writers dead in the hospitals and those who, without dying abandoned, died of tuberculosis—the sickness of those who eat little and live without medical or family care—the example of a man who maintained his passion for literature throughout a lifetime of ninety years—a man who wrote, in his first epoch, with no wish or hope for anything other than self-fulfillment and, in his second epoch, with the desire and hope of finishing what he had begun almost half a century before—cannot but be dazzlingly attractive. For us Alberto Blest Gana is an admirable example of tenacity and disinterestedness. If this is true, why reproach him excessively for what he could not do in any other manner, since it did not depend solely on him? There is nobody in the field of Chilean prose during almost all of the last century who wrote better than he, much less anyone who could show such a prolific output as his.

In other words, I had to write an informative book, one not too critical, although I could add a selection of the favorable and unfavorable criticism of his work. It is true that I did not refrain from making observations about the themes of his novels and their construction, but neither did I try to find him perfect and thus mislead the student. What I avoided was not exactly criticism, but dissection, and cruelty.

The reader who is not a student will find most worthwhile the first thirty-three pages of the book. There brief biographies of Guillermo Cunningham Blest, father of the writer, and of the son Alberto, are sketched; Blest Gana's beginnings are discussed (when, how, and why he began to write), possible or definite influences on his work, his preparation, his confusion, his lack of experience and of knowledge of life at the beginning of his writing, the atmosphere of his home and of the country, the first criticisms, the friendships, the speculations that have been offered, inasmuch as no documentation exists on some of these aspects. His works are examined book by book, but not exhaustively, as that is not necessary except for a very few of them. What elements he employed, what characters, what influences he shows, what deficiencies and lapses; some of his faults of expression are pointed out, some background of the novels is given, and opinions of historians, critics, and others are cited. An evaluation of his genre writing is given and, finally, extracts are quoted from opinions expressed about this author by Domingo Amunátegui Solar, in his book *Las Letras Chilenas* (Chilean Literature); by Pedro N. Cruz, in *Estudios Sobre la Literatura Chilena* (Studies of Chilean Literature); by Eliodoro Astorquiza, in "Don Alberto Blest Gana," an article published in the *Revista Chilena*; by Raúl Silva Castro in his book *Alberto Blest Gana*; and by Alone (Hernán Díaz Arrieta), in his book of the same title. The last two books won prizes in the same contest. This part ends with my own conclusion, from which I have already quoted some lines.

Alberto Blest Gana



### Plots and Characters

If the reader desires to learn about the subject matter and construction of Blest Gana's novels, he will have to read the second part ("Description of Plots and Selected Excerpts"), where the plots and characters are discussed and one or more passages of the work are added when it seems appropriate. This work was a real pleasure for me. It is true that I had to read all Blest Gana's works, from their first to last page, and that the reading of some of the first ones was exasperating, but I had to do it if I wished to be fair. Moreover, by doing this I saw the writer's mental evolution unfold clearly before my eyes; how he passed from superficial or false themes and plots, with characters who could not stand up under the slightest examination—all characteristic of youth and inexperience in life and literature—to others more solid, more real. I saw the characters gain size, have a past, live in some part of the inhabited world, cease to be a reflection or a weak reproduction of another one or of some other author's character, and the plot gain similar virtues. The resolutions of the plots become no longer capricious or crudely done; the characters who commit suicide by jumping into a river or die an inexplicable violent death begin to disappear; and the subject matter is presented from a sound social and intellectual basis that was lacking at first, although at times this is done in an overly complicated manner, as in *Durante la Reconquista*.

This observing and feeling how the development of a writer was accomplished—his whole development—is perhaps the best part of the work involved in a book like this. The true writer has an evolution; the false writer has nothing. The evolution of the true writer begins when he starts to write and ends when he stops. Those who stop their evolution in mid-course and continue to write, repeat themselves. It has been said that genius is the product of great patience; this patience is development—evolution. If we examine the first and last works produced by any writer, we see the why and how of his development, his evolution, and we can see that the longer or more complete a writer's evolution, the better he is. There are some who are otherwise: they begin with a

fault or deficiency and never succeed in overcoming it in such a way that it is forgotten; others start with various faults in expression, in construction, and in taste, and develop smoothly, overcoming them all.

A regular development is observed in Blest Gana's work in almost all dimensions. We say, almost, because there was one in which he did not excel: his mode of expression, his style. We don't know why it happened or why it happens, whether it was an inherent deficiency or a misguided contempt for good writing. When our great historian Diego Barros Arana wrote about *Martín Rivas*, one of the best novels of Blest Gana's first period, he said in referring to its literary merits: "The distinctive characteristic of the style in this and Señor Blest Gana's other novels is sobriety. He does not seek to surprise or capture the reader with imagery, or the brilliance of literary forms." Barros Arana may have been then, and surely is considered today, a good historian, at least a reliable one, but the paragraph quoted makes it clear that he understood nothing of literary forms, even though he wrote a short treatise on Spanish poetical forms; he was a professor. Perhaps in making this assertion he was also attempting to justify his own style, a very poor one. But there may be other reasons and perhaps it would be worthwhile to inquire whether to write "soberly"—in other words, poorly—was a virtue to many Chileans in the past century. It is very possible. When we study the works of the Chilean writers of the past century, up to the 1880's, we see that their principal characteristic is their poverty of expression. Landscapes are not seen or are seen with myopic or farsighted eyes. Only with the advent of Rubén Darío, and perhaps under other influences that it would take too long to explore here, did Chilean literature abandon its provincial awkwardness and its stiff and dull style to embark on a search for more succulent means of expression and a more graceful plasticity.

Finally, did Blest Gana think of himself more as an observer of daily life and a historian, than as a writer, that is to say, than as an artist? Did he give more importance to events that did happen than to events that could have happened? Let us not exaggerate. "I swore to be a novelist. . . . Ever since then, I have pursued my objective, tirelessly, without being dismayed by indifference, without being irritated by criticism, and without priding myself on the applause with which the public has acclaimed my novels." (From a letter written to Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna.) The man who wrote those words had to be a writer.

We might add that Blest Gana's evolution ended with the writing of *El Loco Estero* (The Crazy Estuary), which some people regard as his best work. He should not have written anything more. He was already eighty, more than old enough to stop writing. But he persisted, publishing the novel *Gladys Fairfield*, in which he returned to the type of the first works that flowed from his pen; he went back to the unreal, fictitious world, in which the characters live and work with no reason, for no physical or environmental reasons of any kind. One of the characters in this novel was based on a real person, but

the novelist distorted him so much that he seemed like a ghost from his first romantic works.

### The Task of Selection

The most difficult job seemed to be selection. Can anthologies be made of novelists' work? At first glance, it seems impossible. A novel is an organism, and what is more, a complex organism that has not only a style, but also a plot or a subject and various characters. At times it carries a message. There are descriptions, reflections, dialogue, and a problem is studied or a state of affairs presented. Each of these factors is important in its own right and all together they make up a novel. How to separate them, what is the most important, what is most interesting? There are novelists in whose work form is the best developed aspect, in others it is the substance, or the technique of construction, the tone, the feeling for the quality of life—skeptical, pessimistic, dramatic, tragic, humorous. In other novelists everything is inseparably interwoven and this makes for difficulty in selecting.

If one wants to compile an anthology of Chilean prose, to present a picture of its evolution, there are no problems—it is the prose of the whole country; but to compile an anthology of a single novelist is much more difficult. I thought it over, and the first question was: What kind of a novelist is Blest Gana? According to the majority of his critics, he was principally a genre or historical writer, that is to say, he worked on given specific events, not the whole picture. *Durante la Reconquista*, for example, is not properly a novel of the Reconquest; it served him only as a canvas on which to paint or embroider a theme; but several of his characters are historical figures and, although neither *El Loco Estero* nor *La Aritmética en el Amor* is a collection of articles or descriptions of everyday life, the local color is there and gives the novels, especially the former one, a great deal of their flavor and consistency. Second question: In what does Blest Gana excel? In description, reflections, dialogue, in the grace or beauty of his prose, the psychological observations, or the portrayal of characters and settings? I examined them all and reviewed many of his pages and decided how to proceed. Moreover, it was not only a question of making a selection or compiling an anthology, which would have been rather absurd, but of seeing Blest Gana's work as a whole: what there is in his novels, what they are about, how he writes, how he develops, and so on. If I selected in accordance with all these considerations and gave a résumé and, at times, a discussion of the plots, all would come out more or less well.

I nearly omitted his first three novels, *Una Escena Social* (A Social Scene), *Engaños y Desengaños* (Illusion and Disillusion), and *Los Desposados* (The Married Ones); there was no material to use. From the fourth, *El Primer Amor* (First Love), I selected a picture of local customs—a description of Christmas Eve in Santiago. I passed over another three, *La Fascinación*, *Juan de Aria*, and *Un Drama en el Campo* (A Drama in the Country), and then I came to *La Aritmética en el Amor*, from which I selected passages describing two local cus-

toms—how Good Friday is observed, and a walk in the country—in addition to some dialogue, character sketches, and bits of the plot. I ignored *El Pago de las Deudas* (The Payment of Debts), at whose end the hero commits suicide by drowning in the sea, but not without first writing a letter in which he says: "Tomorrow I will go swimming in the sea and drown." I paused, hat in hand, before *Martín Rivas*, from which I selected passages in which there are also scenes of daily life—selling shoes in the streets, a theme that also attracted Sarmiento, and a dance at which elegant quadrilles and popular *cuecas* are done; an example of the vernacular of the people; a little of the country's history: the unsuccessful revolt of the Sociedad de la Igualdad (Equality Society) in 1850; besides dialogue, descriptions, and reflections of all kinds—poetic and philosophic (Blest Gana was much given to digressions). I made myself ignore *La Venganza* (Vengeance) and *Mariluán*, the sooner to enjoy selecting more than seventy pages from one of his best youthful novels, *El Ideal de un Calavera* (The Ideal of a Good-time Charley), with descriptions of local scenes, rodeos, women healers and *curanderos*, country picnics with fireworks, songs, parlor games, and the inevitable dances.

And I continued in this manner with *Durante la Reconquista* and *El Loco Estero*, omitting *Gladys Fairfield* and *Los Trasplantados*. Here the work ended. I enjoyed doing it and I also suffered. The good points and bad points, the virtues and defects of one Chilean writer are the good points and bad points, the virtues and defects of all Chilean writers. All of us, no matter how much some may dislike it, are in the same boat and will be measured by the same rule. ☞

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